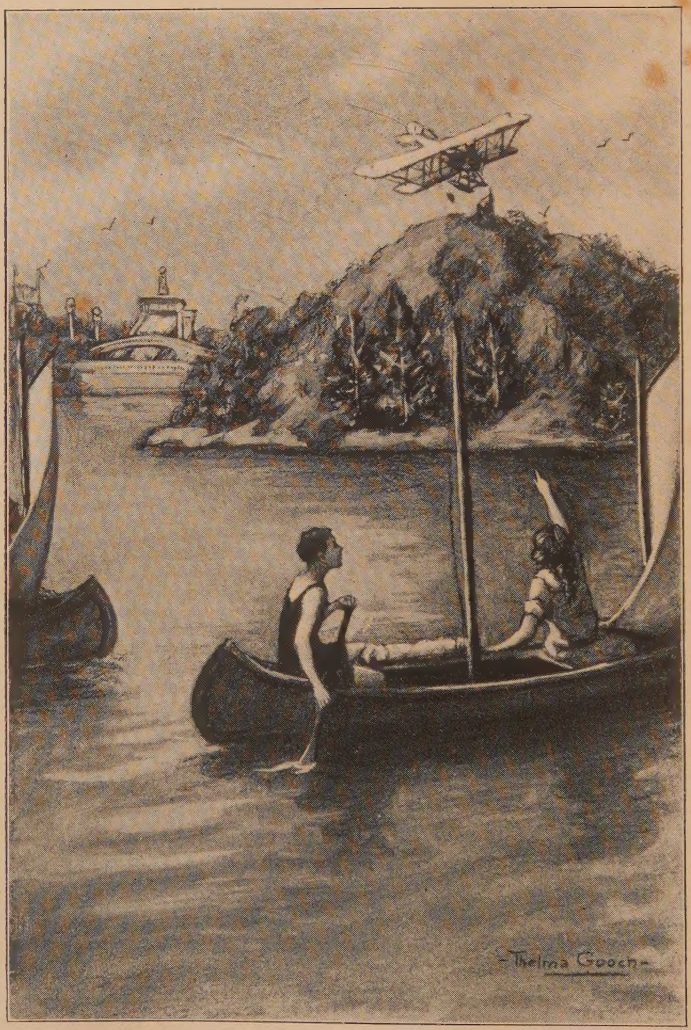
BETTY GORDON *at* OCEAN PARK

By the Author of
RUTH FIELDING



OUT OF THE MACHINE FELL AN OBJECT.

"Betty Gordon at Ocean Park" Page 146

Betty Gordon at Ocean Park

OR

Gay Days on the Boardwalk

BY

ALICE B. EMERSON

AUTHOR OF "BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM," "BETTY GORDON AT MOUNTAIN CAMP," "THE RUTH FIELDING SERIES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

Books for Girls

By ALICE B. EMERSON

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

BETTY GORDON SERIES

BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM
BETTY GORDON IN WASHINGTON
BETTY GORDON IN THE LAND OF OIL
BETTY GORDON AT BOARDING SCHOOL
BETTY GORDON AT MOUNTAIN CAMP
BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK

RUTH FIELDING SERIES

RUTH FIELDING OF THE RED MILL
RUTH FIELDING AT BRIARWOOD HALL
RUTH FIELDING AT SNOW CAMP
RUTH FIELDING AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT
RUTH FIELDING AT SILVER RANCH
RUTH FIELDING ON CLIFF ISLAND
RUTH FIELDING AT SUNRISE FARM
RUTH FIELDING AND THE GYPSIES
RUTH FIELDING IN MOVING PICTURES
RUTH FIELDING DOWN IN DIXIE
RUTH FIELDING AT COLLEGE
RUTH FIELDING IN THE SADDLE
RUTH FIELDING IN THE RED CROSS
RUTH FIELDING AT THE WAR FRONT
RUTH FIELDING HOMEWARD BOUND
RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST
RUTH FIELDING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST
RUTH FIELDING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE
RUTH FIELDING TREASURE HUNTING

CUPPLES & LEON CO., PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK

Printed in U. S. A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	SOMETHING ALWAYS HAPPENS	1
II	SALLY CUTLER	12
III	A CIRCUS ON HIS HANDS	20
IV	THE TAIL OF THE KITE	28
V	SURPRISE AND EXPECTATION	38
VI	THOSE TUCKER TWINS	46
VII	AN ODOROUS GALE	56
VIII	SX-43	64
IX	THE BUNGALOW CANOE CLUB	72
X	THE DANCE AT THE CAMPEACHIE	81
XI	A MOMENT OF PERIL	89
XII	THE FEAST OF THE HOBGOBLINS	95
XIII	NOT FAST COLORS	107
XIV	CONVINCING EVIDENCE	114
XV	A GLORIOUS FOURTH	122

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVI	An Event of Moment	132
XVII	What Fell From the Sea-Plane	139
XVIII	The Excitement Continues	147
XIX	A Complete Disappearance	154
XX	The Dancers	160
XXI	Boardwalk Diversions	169
XXII	Trailing Jasper Heddick	178
XXIII	At the Summit of Pike's Peak	186
XXIV	In the Cavern	193
XXV	An End to All Things	199

BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK

CHAPTER I

SOMETHING ALWAYS HAPPENS

"BUT nothing ever happens on this road," wailed Libbie. "We've tried it before and never saw even a rabbit or a chipmunk. We just have to climb, and climb."

"That tells the story," laughed Bobby Littell, her cousin, tossing her curls. "It is the climb you object to. Really, Libbie, you are getting too fat to move."

"I'm not either," cried the plump and dreamy-eyed Libbie. "It's horrid of you to call me fat. I am just pleasingly plump."

"Oh! Oh!" rallied the curly-headed one; but before she could say more Betty Gordon, her closest chum, who did not often disagree with Bobby, intervened:

"Don't tease poor Libbie about her avoirdupois, Bobby. She cannot really help it, you know."

"Indeed?" scoffed Bobby, but laughing too.

"As long as she takes a box of caramels to bed with her she will continue to put on weight. Pos-i-tive-ly!"

"These remarks upon poor Libbie's all too fleshy figure have nothing to do with the possibility of romance appearing on this road," Louise, Bobby's sister and the plump girl's cousin, put in briskly. She was always the peacemaker. Although she was a year and a half younger than Bobby, she was so quiet and sensible that she seemed the elder. "But how can we tell, Libbie, what is waiting for us just around the corner?"

"We-ell," responded Libbie doubtfully, unable to make a better rejoinder, and the six girls marched on up the stony hillside road.

Norma and Alice Guerin were of the party, and that for a very good reason. Betty and the Littell girls made their headquarters near Washington, D. C., between school terms. The Guerin girls lived in another part of the country. It was now June, and vacation plans were rife among the roster of pupils at Shadyside, a boarding school which these girls attended.

Betty Gordon, who dearly loved Norma and Alice, whom she had known even longer than she had the Littells, had decided to include the former in her plans for the summer vacation, now not far distant.

"Uncle Dick writes that the lawyer has found

a cottage at Ocean Park," Betty said, continuing the topic that had previously held their united attention. "Bob is to run down next Saturday to see if the place is all right."

"Why!" demanded Bobby, "what does Bob Henderson know about selecting a house? I wish your uncle would let you and me go, Betty."

"Well, I guess Bob knows something too," declared Betty loyally. "You know he's got lots of sense, Bobby."

"M-mm."

"What does that mean?" demanded her chum, rather sharply.

"It expresses some agreement with a modicum of doubt," said Louise, and, thus having repeated a favorite observation of one of their teachers, smiles appeared on all the girls' faces.

That is, on all but that of the plump Libbie. She toiled on despairingly behind the others, muttering:

"Nothing ever does happen on this road, I tell you."

"What nonsense!" cried Alice Guerin gaily. "You know very well, Libbie, that something is sure to happen when Betty Gordon leads the way. And there will be delightful happenings down there at Ocean Park. I can scarcely wait to slip the scholastic yoke for the summer," mimicking

the words of another of their instructors at Shadyside.

"That doesn't make any difference to this road," grumbled Libbie. "And I've got a stone bruise."

Suddenly Betty, who was in advance with Bobby, halted and held up her hand for silence.

"What's the matter?" demanded her chum, staring at her. "Why stand here like a traffic officer, Betty?"

"Listen!" commanded Betty Gordon.

Just ahead of the girls was a sharp and wooded turn in the road. From beyond that turn a sound had first reached her ears. Now the others heard it.

"You notice, Libbie, that something is about to happen," laughed Louise. "Wait."

Libbie promptly sat down on a bowlder. "Wait" could mean but one thing to her—"rest." The sound they heard was the sputtering roar of a balky motor. It stopped abruptly. Then two angry voices broke into argument.

"Something really has happened," agreed Norma Guerin.

"It is an auto breakdown," announced Bobby, with more confidence. "As you are the past-mistress of the art of coaxing a balky motor engine to life and duty, Norma Guerin——"

"Let us see who is in trouble, first," said Betty, with some caution.

She led the way, and the six girls rounded the turn in the road, chattering and curious, Libbie reluctantly bringing up the rear. A big touring car was stalled in the middle of the narrow road. No other conveyance could have got by on the one side or the other.

Two young men had their heads under the hood. They were both coatless and their bared arms were smutched with oil. They had flung their hats and coats into the tonneau of the car, and to Betty's mind they did not seem suitably dressed in any case for a long automobile trip. Yet the car showed evidences of much travel.

One of the young fellows jerked his head away from the motor and stared around at the sextette of Shadyside pupils. For an instant he looked startled—Betty thought he seemed frightened. Though why he should be afraid of a group of girls it would be hard to say. They were scarcely of frightful aspect.

This fellow was a man in his early twenties. He had a lean, deeply lined face which was unnaturally hard of expression. A mean grin developed on his features, he shrugged his shoulders, and then attracted the attention of his mate with a nudge of his elbow.

"I say, Jasp, look what's blown in. You couldn't have shut the door tight."

Betty flushed at these words, and even Louise Littell looked annoyed. Norma, who might have briskly gone forward to offer her expert services, came promptly to a standstill.

"Heh?" ejaculated the second man, who, when he stood up and looked around, likewise displayed an unpleasant, if youthful, visage.

"You'll know us, girls, if you see us again, I reckon," growled this second fellow. "But I suppose we should be proud to have your company," and he made a sweeping and scornful bow.

"Never mind 'em," said the first speaker, going back to his work. "Get busy. Want to be nailed here?"

"There's something coming down the hill now," the man, Jasp, said. "If it's that girl with her freak pony——"

"Don't waste time."

"Just the same," the girls heard Jasp mutter, "she saw us when we passed, just as sure as you are a foot high."

"Drop it, Jasp!" exclaimed the other. "Want to tell all you know? Little pitchers have big ears."

But he stood out from the car again to listen, and was undoubtedly made more anxious by the rattling noise he heard. Betty and her compan-

ions heard the sound as well. They stared at each other with suspicion. The thought took root in their minds that there was something very wrong with these two young men as well as with their car.

"Do you suppose it is stolen?" whispered Bobby in Betty's ear.

"Sh!" rejoined the other warningly.

"Humph!" ejaculated the rebellious Bobby. "I'm no small child, I'd have them know. Fancy his calling us 'little pitchers.' "

The rattling of wheels grew louder, although the vehicle approaching was not in sight. The road wound up among the clumps of trees and bowlders were scattered over the hillside in such a crooked way that people approaching each other on it met unexpectedly. The road's twists and turns, as well as its steepness, were good reasons for Libbie's expressed objection to hiking this way.

The two young men fussing with the car were evidently in haste to get away. The glances they shot now and then at the girls from Shadyside were almost threatening. Betty felt that their departure would possibly relieve the tension, so she said:

"Well, Norma, you cannot doctor *this* car, I guess. Let's go on."

The two fellows glanced after them, but said

nothing more within the hearing of the sextette. But the latter were glad to get out of sight of the stalled car.

"They are two awful men!" Alice Guerin declared.

"What did I tell you?" complained Libbie. "This road——"

"Dear me!" Bobbie broke in with laughter, "I am sure we struck something out of the ordinary. They might be automobile bandits from their looks."

"Hush!" warned Betty. "Here comes that wagon, or whatever it is."

At the moment the automobile engine behind them broke into a roar. The noise continued, became more subdued as the driver manipulated the mechanism, and then the girls heard the car start on down the hill. It went with an angry spurt of speed and, in a few moments, the noisy throbbing of the engine mellowed in the distance.

"Well," remarked Bobby, "they went without biting us."

Alice Guerin suddenly uttered a wondering cry. Unlike the others she had been looking forward instead of back.

"Dear me, Betty Gordon!" she cried, "you've been out West and all. Is this what they call a pinto pony?"

"Where's a pinto pony?" demanded Betty, whirling about to look up the road.

She joined the other girls in an exclamation of surprise, if not of alarm. The strangest vehicle, drawn by the strangest looking animal, driven by the strangest looking girl they had ever seen, had just come into view. The animal was small and very gracefully built and trotted perfectly over the stony road. It was mainly of a yellow-brown color striped with black about barrel, legs, neck and even across its face. Altogether it was a most curious looking driving animal.

"Somebody's painted the poor horse," cried Louise. "What a pity."

"Goodness!" exclaimed her sister Bobby, "don't you see what that is? It's not a horse at all."

"Elucidate, Miss Know-it-all!" exclaimed the still puzzled Louise.

The creature looked more like a donkey than it did like a horse, for it had very little mane and only a paint-brush tail. It wore a heavy muzzle.

"Why, girls, it's a zebra!" cried Bobby.

"Right out of a circus," murmured Libbie. "Oh, my!"

"I should say that girl driving is out of a circus, too," drawled Bobby.

"What a strange looking outfit," murmured Betty Gordon, staring as hard as any of the

others at the approaching girl and her strange driving pony.

She was a lanky girl in an ugly brown and white checked gingham dress of an atrocious cut and fit, if it could be said to fit at all, and wearing a faded sunbonnet stiffened all about, it was evident, with narrow shingles, like a Shaker's bonnet. Her feet were bare.

She sat in the narrow seat of what looked like a sulky, save that it must have been "home made." There were no pneumatic tires, no springs, and every spoke and joint in the entire vehicle rattled as though the sulky was about to fall apart. That was why the noise of the girl's approach had been heard so far in advance of her appearance.

She was a girl of perhaps fifteen, but very strong. She braced her bare feet against the bar behind the zebra's hindquarters and held to the reins with the muscles of her wrists and forearms swelling plainly under the brown skin. The strange animal was evidently hard-bitted, if it was well trained.

When it saw the six girls standing beside the road the zebra gave every evidence of being skittish. It shied over toward the other ditch, dancing and otherwise acting in threatening style. The girl grabbed a slender willow branch from the

socket beside her and cut him smartly along the flank.

But she was so fully taken up with the zebra's actions that she did not observe what lay before her. The animal had danced too far off the road. When it darted forward again under the sting of the lash to get past the group of schoolgirls, the off wheel of the sulky smashed with terrific impact against a bowlder that here cropped out of the ditch's bank.

The sulky stopped as though it had collided with the most immovable object in the world. And the zebra stopped, too, thrown back upon its haunches. The harness was strong; but the wheel was not. It collapsed like a falling house of blocks, and the lanky girl in the sunbonnet and gingham dress was shot over the zebra's head and came down sprawling into the roadway almost at the feet of the girls from Shadyside School.

CHAPTER II

SALLY CUTLER

FOLLOWING the accident, Betty Gordon was the first of the startled and surprised spectators to move. She was not quick enough to break the fall of the long-legged driver of the strange turnout, but she was in season to grab the bit of the zebra before it could break away with the shattered sulky and escape.

Betty was more used to horses than any other girl of her party, if she was not used to such a strange driving animal as this attached to the sulky. And as the zebra was muzzled she did not mind—not very much, at least—if it did snap at her. Let it dance and quiver and snort all it wanted to, Betty hung on.

That was quite in keeping with the girl's character. Impulsive she was, and rather daring and reckless, but her determination and her ability to carry through a thing once it was begun, tempered that natural impatience and impulsiveness. Her character was more rounded than that of most

girls of her age, and she won the confidence of older people because of such attributes.

And she needs have good sense and a poise above that of most girls of thirteen or fourteen. Betty Gordon had lived in so many places and had adventured into such strange conditions that her character had developed in accord with the practical demands made upon it.

She had been left an orphan more than two years before this story opens and left to the care and upbringing of a bachelor uncle whom she had never seen. But when she did see and get acquainted with Mr. Richard Gordon the girl was sure that such another uncle never could have come into the life of a lonely, eager, and imaginative girl.

Mr. Gordon's business affairs made it impossible for him to take Betty with him wherever he went. He was a promoter of oil and mining properties and he traveled a good deal in out-of-the-way places. He did not at first see how he could take his niece with him at all.

So he found her what he believed would be a healthful and happy home in the country, and in the first volume of the series, entitled "Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm," the girl really began to learn to take care of herself and to endure not a few trials and temptations. Her surroundings were unpleasant at the farm; but she met there

Bob Henderson, likewise an orphan, who had proved since that meeting to be the most faithful boy chum and cavalier that a girl could possess. While at Bramble Farm, too, Betty became acquainted with the Guerin sisters. But her subsequent adventures for some time separated Betty from the Guerins and everybody else she had known in the neighborhood of the farm, save Bob.

Betty actually had to run away from Bramble Farm, and for a different, but quite as good, reason, Bob ran away too. In "Betty Gordon in Washington," the second book of the series, the two friends met again in the United States capital, and there Betty was befriended by the Littell family, and later went with Roberta and Louise Littell to Shadyside School. There also went Alice and Norma Guerin and the Littell girls' Vermont cousin, Elizabeth, or Libbie Littell.

Before these schooldays, however, and a year before the present summer, Uncle Dick found himself so situated in Oklahoma that he could have Betty with him for a time. Betty started for the West, and with her went Bob Henderson bound on a private mission. In "Betty Gordon in the Land of Oil" Bob found his relatives and aided them to secure a fortune by selling their land to oil speculators. Betty had some wonderful adventures in and around Flame City, and toward fall they all returned East, Betty and Bob

to enter school and Mr. Gordon to travel in Canada on important business.

Betty joined her girl friends from Washington and Bob joined the boys he had met at Fairfields, the Littells' beautiful Virginia home. The girls went to Shadyside School and the boys entered the Salsette Military Academy, directly across a beautiful lake from Shadyside. "Betty Gordon at Boarding School," the fourth volume, relates the fine times the young people enjoyed in and about these institutions of learning.

At Christmas Mr. and Mrs. Littell opened their home on the Potomac to their daughters and their school friends, and Fairfields became the scene of delightful activities—parties, horseback rides, motor trips, and innumerable pleasant outings. But to Betty's mind the most enjoyable thing of all was having her Uncle Dick with her for some time, for he came from Canada for the holidays. Mr. Gordon had promised to visit an old friend at Mountain Camp, and Betty longed to accompany him to the Adirondacks. But school was scheduled to open very soon after New Year's, and as Roberta Littell, who was always addressed as "Bobby," even by her good-natured parents who had no boy in the family, said: "School has the first call."

One never can tell what is going to happen next in this world, however. Something did happen

that made it possible for Betty and her friends to spend nearly a fortnight at Mr. Jonathan Canary's lodge in the snow-bound wilderness, and the adventures of the party as recorded in "Betty Gordon at Mountain Camp" were thrilling. Betty made new friends in this last volume of the series, as always; the most important among them being the three Bellethornes.

The happy and exciting time at Mountain Camp had come to an end all too soon. The young folks were recalled to Shadyside and Salsette. The months that had elapsed since the opening of both schools had been busy and interesting ones for Betty Gordon and all her friends. And now the closing of school for the summer was but a fortnight off.

This was one Saturday afternoon when the six girls had started off for a long hike without being escorted by any of their boy friends from the military academy across the lake. Perhaps Libbie had objected to this road up the mountain because she knew they would meet none of the Salsette youths in this direction. Libbie was a romantic girl. She had her own choice among the Salsette boys—Timothy Derby. He wore shell-rimmed spectacles and read poetry with her.

"Don't—ever—say—again, Libbie, that—nothing will happen!" panted her cousin Bobby, who had run almost as quickly as her chum, Bet-

ty, to the rescue. Only Bobby was bent on rescuing the sprawling girl who had shot over the zebra's head and was now almost under his feet. "Get up! Hurry! Suppose that creature kicks you!" Bobby added gaspingly.

"He'd better not!" declared the strange girl in a loud but not unpleasant voice. "I'd lay into him with a goad if he did. And he knows it, the rascal. Ben Ali ain't half as crazy as he acts."

"Ben Ali?"

"That zebry. Oh, yes, that's his name. Stand still, you botheration!" she added, moving nearer to take the bridle from Betty's hand.

Betty gave it up willingly, for although she had learned something about horses she was not altogether sure that a zebra was even as trustworthy as a wild Western pony.

"That wheel is smashed all to smithereens, ain't it?" observed the strange girl. "Well, them fellers will get away now, for sure. Did you see 'em?"

"Who?" asked Libbie, wide-eyed.

"You mean the two young men in the automobile?" asked Betty quickly.

"Yes. Them's them. Smarties! They tried to cash a bad check at my pop's hay and grain store in Stoneville. But he didn't bite. Si Cutler ain't as dumb as city folks think him. No, sirree!"

The girls from Shadyside were as much amused by the way the girl spoke as by her odd appearance.

"Them fellers got that car off'n my uncle. Uncle Phin ain't so smart as pop. When they went by the house just now I saw the car and I knew it. I harnessed Ben Ali——"

"This?" interposed Bobby again.

"The zebry. I harnessed him and put out after them. And if he wasn't the meanest thing that ever trotted on four hoofs I wouldn't have broke down here. But here I am, and that's all there is to it."

"Oh, not all!" cried Betty, her eyes suddenly dancing. "You must tell us something more, Miss—Miss Cutler."

"Sally is my name. Sally Cutler. And Silas Cutler is my father. Hay and grain store, and a liv'ry stable, and into anything else he can turn a penny at. At Stoneville, over the mountain."

"Thank you, Sally," said Betty more quietly. "My name is Betty Gordon, and these girls with me—well, they are all named Littell or Guerin. You will have to learn which is which gradually. But you can tell us something we all want to know right now. How did you come to be driving such a creature as this zebra?"

"Ben Ali?"

"Yes," Betty said. "It seems to me the strangest thing——"

"Nothing strange about it," interrupted Sally Cutler promptly. "Pop had to take most of Hannigan's Famous Caravan for a feed bill, and we've got to make what use we can of it. This zebry did a trick act in the ring. He's as old as the hills, they say, and pretty tame—for a zebry. So I drive him. And he don't eat hardly a thing. But the elephant! Goodness me! If pop had kept the elephant, in two months he would have been a bankrupt, no two ways about it!"

CHAPTER III

A CIRCUS ON HIS HANDS

"DEAR *me!*" breathed Louise, who was nothing if not practical. "Is she sort of crazy, do you suppose? Fancy having a circus on one's hands!" She said this so low that Sally Cutler could not possibly have heard.

Libbie, who stood next to Louise, was interested.

"My!" she said aloud. "How interesting! Just think of all those circus performers in tights and tinsel being in one's—er——"

"Livery stable or feed store, Libbie?" demanded Bobby, bursting into a laugh. Then to Sally, she added: "I guess your father had his hands full."

"You'd think so if you saw the fat lady," returned Sally gloomily enough. "She's broken down our best sofa sitting on it. And she's always sitting. Never walks a step if she can help it. She's not as bad as the elephant was——"

"Goodness' sake!" gasped Betty Gordon.

"My head is ringing! Do I hear the same things you other girls hear? Do tell me the truth, Sally Cutler—did the elephant actually sit on the sofa?"

"No, you goosey," replied the country girl, with scorn. "I meant about her eating. The doctor's put her on a diet—the fat lady, I mean. But he wasn't ever on a diet in his life—the elephant, that is. Pop got rid of him in a hurry. But the living skeleton eats 'most as much. He ain't on a diet."

"I know I am going to be silly before this is over," declared Betty, laughing. "I can't follow you at all. The fat lady—the elephant—the living skeleton— What a conglomeration! Are they all at your house?"

"Not the elephant, I tell you. Or pop would have gone broke. He says so himself. But the rest of 'em—goodness! What could you do? There was the fat lady and the skeleton, and the bearded lady and the tattooed boy. That's her son."

"Who's son?" queried Betty, trying to get it all straight in her mind.

"The bearded lady's. He's a nice boy if he is all marked up. You don't see it when he's got his clothes on. I like that boy. And he helps do the chores. The bearded lady cooks some, too. But the fat lady and the skeleton just sit

on the sofa—when it ain't broke—like a king and queen on their throne, sort of. They've never done anything but that, you see. You see, just being fat and awfully skinny is an awfully wearing job. They have to keep their minds on it all the time.

"Dear me!" murmured Betty again, while the other girls did not know whether to sympathize with Sally Cutler or burst into hilarious laughter.

"Yes, the fat lady's on a diet. Otherwise pop would have had to let her go to the highest bidder same as he did the elephant. But I don't know as he makes much by her only eating apples and a sort of a dry mash that comes in a package like chicken feed. You see, she is hungry all the time, poor soul; and she says it helps her to see other folks eat. That living skeleton, he tries to comfort her by eating enough for twins. I never! You'd think to look at him that if he swallowed a pea you could trace it all the way down to his waist, he's so mortal thin. But as much as he eats—and it's a plenty!—you'd never know from the look of him that it had any effect. But it all adds to the bill, and pop's beginning to get good and worried."

Betty drew a long sigh and the other girls moved restlessly. Their leader begged:

"Do explain, Sally. We're awfully interested. How did your father come by this circus?"

"Hay and grain bill."

"Oh! The circus didn't pay its bills?"

"Hannigan's Famous Caravan, it was called. They had bad weather. Lots of these mud shows do. Mud shows is what they call the circuses that travel about on wheels instead of going by railroad; the little ones. It wasn't a bad show, either, when it started out two months ago. The tattooed boy told me all about it. He's traveled with circuses all his life, he and his mother. In the winter they live with his grandfather on a farm up in Maine. I don't believe he likes the circus as much as he did. Humph!

"Well, Hannigan owed my pop a bill from last year, and then he got a lot of stuff this spring on the promise that he'd pay both bills at once. But the lithograph people clamped a lien on him and scraped the till clean as soon as he had a good week or two on the road. Then the bad weather came and they struck Brackenbury—that's only ten miles from Stoneville."

"And there it broke down?" asked Betty.

"Went broke. Complete. Why, the poor old lion hadn't been fed for so long that it broke down and cried when it saw a round steak. And the tiger yowled just like our old cat waiting for milk at the barn door. Poor things!" said Sally reflectively.

"It must have been a sorrowful sight," giggled Bobby.

"You'd say so. At the last show they gave, Bolivar, the elephant, was so busy begging for peanuts around the edge of the ring that he couldn't be made to do his trick properly. And, you know, beside an elephant a peanut is awful small!"

This was finally too much for the listeners. Whether they angered Sally or not, they burst into uproarious laughter. After a moment the country girl grinned, too, showing her fine white teeth.

"Does sound funny, doesn't it?" she observed, quite composed. "Well, that's how it was. Hannigan ran away. He didn't have anything to run away from but debts. The others got away the best they could—all but the fat lady, the bearded lady, the skeleton and that boy. He's nice," Sally repeated reflectively.

"Well, pop took what he could make use of. Bolivar ate two bales of hay and more'n a bale of rye straw the first twenty-four hours. Then pop chained him in the middle of our back lot, expecting he'd burst and not wanting the stable wrecked. But he didn't do anything but weave himself to and fro on his big feet like he was knitting a pair of wool socks. Pop telegraphed all round the country to other circuses and finally

one circus wanted him—and paid for what Bolivar had eaten to get him. So pop was rid of him."

"And you and your father took the freak folks in because they had nowhere to go?"

"They put 'em out of the hotel, and we found 'em sitting on the roadside with their baggage, in the rain. You see, Hannigan hadn't paid them a cent. And it had all come so sudden that they didn't know which way to turn. And, believe me, that fat lady don't turn often! She's perfectly satisfied to sit still and let somebody else do the worrying."

"And is your father going to look after them?" asked Betty. "He must be a kind man."

"Well, he's considered pretty sharp at a bargain," said Sally Cutler, with evident pride in the absent Silas. "He is keepin' 'em, yes. But he proposes to get his money back—and maybe a profit. He's got 'em all signed to a contract, even the tattooed boy, and he's dickering now with a man that's got a dog show and maybe they will get a concession at some shore place and show 'em all there for the season, if they can get a good ballyhoo so late in the summer. I'll be ticket seller, and I've picked out just the dress I want to wear. It's in the window of the Bon Ton Emporium at Blackenbury."

"I'm sure," said Betty, able to control her

laughter now, "that I hope your father will be successful and that the living skeleton will not eat you out of house and home."

"Between you and me," said Miss Cutler, "secretly, I think he's just showing off so as to please the fat lady. He's hurting himself, like enough, with all the food he devours. He's just as sweet on her as he can be."

"Oh!" gasped Libbie. "In love with the fat lady?"

"That's what he is," said Sally, nodding vigorously.

"There must be plenty of her to love," observed Bobby, with some disdain.

But Libbie clasped her hands and looked dreamy, as she murmured:

"Only think of it! It's wonderful!"

They stared at her in unusual amazement. At least Sally Cutler did not understand the romantic girl's meaning. She said abruptly, and in her usual loud and pleasant voice:

"Well, this won't get me home, nor catch the auto thieves. I ought to have telephoned the constable, I suppose. And those men are well on their way, now, to wherever they are going. Did you girls notice the number of the car?"

"It was number seven-ten-two-hundred-six, I think," Betty replied promptly.

"Yes. That's Uncle Phineas' car. Dear me,

he will be unhappy. But I did the only thing I could think of doing at the time—chased 'em with Ben Ali." She looked at the zebra again with some exasperation. "And this botheration managed to bust us all up. M-mm! I don't know what I'm going to do with that wheel. I'll have to lead Ben Ali all the way home anyway—and he leads about as easy as a twelve-wheel locomotive. No ox was ever as stubborn as a zebry."

CHAPTER IV

THE TAIL OF THE KITE

HERE, Bobby said, Betty Gordon came forward in the character of Miss Fixit. She could not bear to see the interesting Sally Cutler left here on the hillside in despair with her strange steed and the broken-down sulky.

"Of course the wheel can't be fixed, so it will travel again—not until it has been to the wheelwright's," she said pleasantly and cheerfully. "But I know something can be done with a fence rail."

"What, for pity's sake?" cried Bobby.

"You hold the zebra's head, Sally. Or maybe you had better take him out of the shafts. We don't want to be kicked."

"I'll stand here and he won't dare kick," said the country girl promptly. "He's so little. I often think it was lucky pop didn't take the camel off that circus. I never could have driven it."

Bobby began to giggle again at this naïve statement; but she managed to help her chum in the

task she had undertaken. The Guerin girls helped too. They were, practically, country girls and as Betty said, "were handy."

First of all they turned the zebra and sulky around, and headed it uphill, and then they raised the end of the sulky's axle and blocked it up with some flat stones. The wheel was quite wrecked, and all they could do with that was to put the pieces into the bottom of the sulky under the narrow seat.

"Come on, Bobby!" commanded Betty Gordon. "Help me pull a rail off the fence. I see you've got a long hitching rope, Sally. We'll need that."

With some difficulty they got the cedar fence rail. Betty stuck one end under the axle and rested it firmly upon the cross-bar of the sulky behind the zebra's twitching hindquarters. The rail was lashed to the axle, its other end was left to drag behind upon the ground, of course.

"Start him up," commanded Betty, when this was done to her satisfaction.

The zebra dragged the sulky in a hobbling fashion. Bobby said the vehicle was now half a wagon and half a sled. But the rattling and scraping was no worse than the rattling of the wheels had been before. The zebra did not seem to mind it.

"That's famous!" cried Sally. "You hold his

head, Miss Betty Gordon, and I'll hop in. You are real nice girls. If you ever get over the mountain to Stoneville, stop and see me. I live right next to pop's feed and hay store. You can't miss it. Silas Cutler is his name. I guess all you girls go to that big school at Shadyside?"

"Yes, we do," said Betty. "And we'll be glad to see you again, Sally."

"I hope the living skeleton won't eat you out of house and home," giggled Bobby.

"He'll earn his keep all right if pop manages to make a dicker with that dog-show man and they get a good stand for the show for all summer. I don't mind having them all there—not even the skeleton. And that tattooed boy is real nice. Good-by!"

She flourished the willow whip again and the zebra started up the hill dragging the bobbing, broken sulky at a fast pace. They were out of sight in a minute.

"Well, that's that," said Bobby briskly. "Now what?"

"Oh, let's not climb any farther on this road," complained Libbie from her seat on a rock. "There's never anything to see on this road. And——"

"Well, for pity's sake, Libbie!" ejaculated Bobby. "Do you dare begin that song after what has just happened? Motor-car thieves! and a

trotting zebra! and hearing all about a man with a circus on his hands! What would satisfy you?"

"Going back to supper," the plump girl returned promptly. "I've a stone bruise on my foot, and I'm hungry," and she said it rather sullenly.

"It's lucky Mr. Cutler hasn't you on his hands, too, Libbie dear," laughed Alice Guerin. "But perhaps we have gone far enough for this afternoon. What do you say, Betty?"

"I don't believe we shall meet any adventure half so interesting as the motor-thieves and Sally Cutler," responded Betty, dimpling. "So I am willing, like Libbie, to start back."

The plump girl got up gladly. "If we walk briskly," she said, "we can catch a car and go to town and have some of that dee-*lic-ious* maraschino cherry ice-cream at Gorgan's. Then we'll have time to get to Shadyside before the supper call."

"I knew she had some scheme in her head," cried Louise emphatically. "Timothy Derby and his crowd are always in Gorgan's on Saturday afternoon."

"They gorge at Gorgan's, do they?" laughed Bobby.

But Betty came to Libbie's rescue.

"That's all right, then," she cried. "I'm game. I want to see Bob, anyway; and he'll be there

with the Tucker twins and Winifred Marion Brown if Timothy is on hand. They don't let Timothy moon about by himself," she added, rather wickedly looking at Libbie, "for they don't know what may happen to him. They promised Mr. Derby, you know."

But Libbie only turned up her nose in scorn at this. She was quite used to having her choice among the boys made good-natured fun of.

They mended their pace, and it was down hill, anyway, so easier to walk fast—at least Libbie said so.

"Weight and gravitation count for much, Miss Anderson says," observed Bobby, grinning.

They arrived at the trolley line very quickly. Of course they saw nothing of the stolen automobile on their way to town, but Betty looked sharply at the tail-number of each touring car that passed them or that their car passed.

"For they might abandon it, you know," she explained to her chum. "I really would like to help those Cutler people. They are kind-hearted —you can see that."

"Do you remember the number, Betty?" asked Bobby.

"I think so. Seven hundred and ten thousand two hundred and six—seven, one, naught, two, naught, six."

"Dear me, you have such a head, Bettykins," said Bobby, admiringly.

"And I've such a stone bruise on my foot," groaned Libbie. "I like Miss Anderson, but I wish she hadn't advised me to take these hikes. I don't believe any amount of walking will keep me slim."

"Keep you slim!" gasped Bobby. "Make you slim, you mean. And it won't do you the least bit of good, for you lay in enough provender after each hike to make up—and more—for the wear and tear on tissue. You had better go on a diet like Sally Cutler's fat lady."

But Libbie was not offended. Nor was she advised. As soon as they reached the confectioner's she marched in at the head of the crowd and without delay ordered a double portion of her favorite ice-cream. The little business section surrounding the Shadyside railway station was a lively place on Saturday afternoon. It was not "out of bounds" for either the girls' school or the military academy, and the young folks from both institutions were apt to meet here more freely than when under the chaperonage of their instructors.

They had fun shopping in the little stores and treating each other at Gorgan's and at the drug-store soda fountain. While the six girls of Betty's crowd were busy at their table half a dozen

boys not far from the girls' ages burst in through the screen doors and hailed them vociferously.

Bob Henderson picked Betty up, chair and all, just to show off his muscle. But she did not mind. She had a wonderful opinion of both Bob's physical and mental attributes.

"Oh, Bob, did you hear from Uncle Dick?"

"I got a note and expense money and directions from his lawyer," responded her friend and coward of Mr. Richard Gordon.

"How nice!"

"I'm going down to Ocean Park to look over Marigold Villa a week from to-day. But the lawyer's clerk says he is sure it is all right. Isn't much time to make changes now, anyway. It is getting late in the rental season."

"But be sure you see that there are enough bedrooms and beds, Bob," said the girl, with clasped hands and an ecstatic expression on her face. "Won't we have a glorious time?"

"I'll say we will," agreed Bob Henderson.

The Tucker twins—Tommy and Ted—Timothy Derby, W. M. Brown and Gilbert Lane, all knew about the proposed outing at Ocean Park, and their parents had already given them permission to join Betty's party. The twelve young people began to jabber about it until the waitress could scarcely get or remember their several orders. Even the bespectacled Timothy was vol-

uble for once, as he sat as close as he could get to Libbie Littell.

"Aren't they spoony?" scoffed Bob in an undertone to Betty.

"Never mind. Libbie has been through something this afternoon. We all have, in fact," and Betty proceeded with great gaiety to tell Bob about the automobile thieves and Sally Cutler with her driving zebra.

"Of all the adventures you get into, Betsey!" ejaculated Bob. "But those fellows ought to be looked after. I'll tell Gil Lane on the q. t. He's got a car in the garage here, you know. What was that number, did you say?"

Betty was repeating it when Louise got up from the table. Louise always remembered!

"We've got just time to get back in the bus for the supper call," she said. "Don't linger, Libbie."

They had all paid their score and Betty and Bob were at the head of the crowd as they went out of the store. Half a block away was the Shadyside Garage. Suddenly Betty clutched Bob's arm and pointed with her other hand toward a touring car that was just leaving the front of the garage.

"See there!" she gasped.

"I see. What of it?" demanded Bob wonderingly.

"The number! The tail-board! Don't you see, Bob?" cried Betty.

"Seven hundred and ten thousand, two hundred and six," muttered the boy.

"It's them!"

"Is that the car those fellows stole?" gasped the boy, at last understanding her excitement. "Cricky!"

"They are getting away! Oh, Bob!" murmured the girl.

"Quick! There's Mr. Grahame across the street! He's the deputy sheriff. I know him! And he's got his car there!"

Without saying a word to their friends Betty and Bob ran across to the county official, who was, indeed, just stepping into his roadster.

"What is the matter?" he asked, observing their excitement at once. "Who has stolen the moon so it won't shine to-night?"

Betty eagerly explained about the two men who had stolen Phineas Cutler's car and pointed out the dust behind the car already at some distance up the road.

"Are you sure, young lady?" the deputy sheriff demanded.

"I am sure of the number plate—I cannot be mistaken in that," cried Betty. "But of course, I did not see the men just now when they left the garage."

"Hop in," said Mr. Grahame decidedly. "You can both crowd in here. We'll see if we can pick 'em up before they cross the county line."

His engine was already running and he let in the clutch. Betty and Bob were scarcely seated when the car sprang ahead. Their friends were left in front of the store staring after them in utter amazement.

"We're the tail of the kite," said Bob, in Betty's ear. "That other car is breaking the speed laws already. I wonder if we'll catch them."

Then Mr. Grahame began to do a little breaking of the speed law himself!

CHAPTER V

SURPRISE AND EXPECTATION

"Mr. Grahame's car," Bob Henderson whispered in Betty's ear, "does not look like much, but it certainly has speed."

They had left the village behind in half a minute. The deputy sheriff drove, too, with disregard for the road laws which he was supposed to uphold. There was, however, official reason for this.

"Oh!" gasped Betty. "Hold on to me, Bob. I feel like a popcorn kernel in a hopper. I'm likely to bounce out any time!"

The car swung around a curve seemingly on two wheels. It bounced over several uneven places in the country highway, and at these times of jouncing Betty was sure the motor-car leaped completely off the ground like a galloping horse.

Around another corner they switched, and then the deputy sheriff grunted. The car Betty Gordon had identified as the stolen one was rolling on at moderate speed not many rods ahead.

"Number seven, ten, two, naught, six," said the officer. "Is that the number, Miss?"

"Oh, yes! I noted it well up on the Stoneville road. It belongs to Mr. Phineas Cutler."

"I know him. Brother of Si, the feed and grain man."

"Yes, sir," panted Betty. "Mr. Si Cutler's daughter was chasing the automobile thieves, but her cart broke down."

"I know her, too. Rangey girl. Built a good deal like a two-by-four scantling."

Betty giggled at this, but she added:

"One of the young men who were stealing the car is named Jasp. The other called him that. Sally Cutler said they had tried to cash a bad check at her father's store."

"Ha!" ejaculated Mr. Grahame. "All round bad eggs, eh? Well, we've got 'em."

The next moment he shot his car around the touring car and back into the middle of the road the bigger car had usurped. There was a shout from behind as the deputy sheriff's car slowed down, blocking the way. Betty and Bob glanced back in amazement.

They might well be amazed. The man who was hastily stopping the bigger car was in ministerial dress—a man perhaps forty-odd years of age. His companion was likewise soberly garbed, and, had Betty and Bob been older, could have been mistaken by them for nobody but a cleric, but an unfledged one. He was very

white, very grave, and was dressed immaculately.

"Great Peter!" Mr. Grahame exclaimed.

Betty had never felt so abashed in her life before. She dared not even look at Bob, for she knew that her boy chum was grinning broadly.

"These the two bad eggs you were telling me about, Miss?" asked Mr. Grahame, in a low voice. "I ought to have help. I don't believe I can take 'em by myself. Some bad men, I'll tell the world."

But just then the older gentleman who sat at the steering wheel of his car, hailed them.

"Mr. Grahame!" he exclaimed, in a nervous voice. "What has happened? Is anything wrong? Surely I have not been exceeding the speed limit? I never can be sure, and my speedometer does not register."

"Well, Doctor," drawled the deputy sheriff, "you haven't been going like a cripple, exactly. I noticed when you left the garage at Shadyside you weren't hobbling. But I didn't stop you on those grounds."

"Then something has happened?" nervously asked the clergyman.

"Nothing much, Doctor Bennett. Nothing for you to worry about. Suppose you introduce me to the gentleman with you?"

"Why—er—certainly. John, this is our very efficient sheriff—deputy sheriff, I should say—

Mr. Jackson Grahame. You surely haven't any papers to serve on Mr. John Pouch or me, Mr. Grahame?"

"Not exactly. But, of course, you know funny things are always happening in the automobile game. You——"

"Don't tell me I have run over anything without knowing it, Mr. Grahame!" cried Dr. Bennet, in great anxiety. "I would not want to kill a chicken or a dog, or anything with this machine. I am so afraid I shall."

"You'll get used to that," chuckled the deputy sheriff. "And, to my knowledge, you haven't so far. But there is something else wrong with your car."

"Oh! What can that be? I stopped at the garage for Mr. Findley to look it over and see if anything was wrong with it."

"Humph! Anybody else there at Findley's at the time?" asked Mr. Grahame.

"Another car was just getting away. The young men with it had needed some small repair work, I believe. I know Mr. Findley came from their car to speak to me."

Meanwhile the deputy sheriff had got out of his automobile and was walking around the bigger car reflectively. Betty seized Bob's arm again and pointed to the number plate on the front of the clergyman's car.

"That's not it," she said.

It was indeed an entirely different license number from the one she had seen on the rear of the car. In a moment Mr. Grahame had returned from the back of the clergyman's car with the red number plate in his hand.

"You weren't going much too fast, Doctor," he chuckled. "But it is astonishing what an automobile will pick up by the wind of its own velocity. How do you explain this plate being on the back of your car?" and he held it out for the minister to behold.

"Why, that's not my number, Mr. Grahame!" cried Dr. Bennett.

"You're not telling me any news," said the officer.

"Attached to my car?" murmured the minister.

"Very much so. Your own number plate unhooked and carried off and this hitched on in its place. That is what started us driving after you from the Shadyside station."

"Oh, my!" gasped the young cleric, for the first time speaking. "Are—are we apprehended, Dr. Bennett?"

"I don't know what for," sighed the older man.

"Can you describe the two young fellows in the car you noticed at Findley's?" asked Grahame briskly.

The doctor could, and did. And his observations had been so true that Betty Gordon jumped up in the roadster and clapped her hands.

"Those are the men, Mr. Grahame! Those are the men!" she cried. "I would know them anywhere. And they are bad looking."

"The young lady says the truth," said the clergyman, smiling now. "Their faces advertise their characters to all beholders. I am sure you do not believe that I have any criminal association with those men, Mr. Grahame."

"Not much, Doctor. But they switched tail-plates on you. And for a good reason, I believe. I don't know where they are bound for, but they know there's bound to be a hue and cry out for them. And if anything happens, or a car is traveling fast, it is the rear number plate that is usually noticed. An 'accident,' so-called, can happen to their front plate and they can explain its loss. Your plate attached to the rear of that stolen car may cause you some trouble, Doctor."

"Oh, my! I hope not!" cried the white-faced young man beside the clergyman. "Perhaps, Dr. Bennett, I would better get out here."

"If you do, John," said the older man rather grimly, "you will have a ten-mile walk to my house. So I advise you to sit still."

"Oh, nothing very bad will happen," observed Mr. Grahame, walking back to his own car. "If

anybody calls you up about the number plate, Doctor, refer him to me. All right. Thank you." And he stepped into his car and pressed his foot on the starter.

"Oh," murmured Betty Gordon, "I hope you won't blame me too much, Mr. Grahame. I did think it was the stolen car."

"You are all right, child," rejoined the deputy sheriff, as he backed the roadster around and finally headed back toward the station. "You are a quick and observant girl. It may be that through your sharp eyesight we can apprehend those fellows."

"That would be great, Betty!" exclaimed Bob.

"Where shall I drop you two?" added Mr. Grahame.

"I must get right back to the school," said Betty, suddenly anxious at the delay the adventure had caused.

When the deputy sheriff understood the situation he insisted on driving over to Shadyside School to leave Betty. Afterward he drove around the end of the lake and left Bob at the gate of Salsette.

During the next week Bob and Betty had no opportunity of meeting to discuss the affair, and neither of them learned at that time anything further about the motor-car thieves or what had become of them.

In truth the young folks from Washington and its environs, although none of them were graduating from Shadyside or Salsette at the end of this term, were so busy during these last days that they could not think of many outside matters save the delights of the jaunt to Ocean Park that now was plain in the offing.

Bob Henderson ran down to the shore resort, as he had been instructed to do, and came back with glowing reports about the delights of the boardwalk, the comforts of the cottage that had been selected through Mr. Gordon's agency, and the wonderful bathing and fishing that was promised them.

Betty had received another letter from her Uncle Dick, and he promised to arrive at Ocean Park on the very day the party from Shadyside would reach there. Miss Anderson, who was the girls' physical instructor, had long since given her word to act as chaperone. Mrs. Eustice had approved of all the arrangements.

All, therefore, as the day approached were on the *qui vive* of expectation.

CHAPTER VI

THOSE TUCKER TWINS

A JUNE break-up at Shadyside was an event. When Betty Gordon and her particular friends had departed from the school at the time of the Christmas vacation it was not like this, although there had been at that time much bustle and confusion.

Now there was something just a little serious in the leave-takings. For there were seniors who would never come back to school again, save to visit. And these who had graduated seemed to want to bid even the youngest and least important of their schoolmates good-by. "The youngsters" suddenly found themselves of importance.

Without knowing how she had done it, Betty had made many friends among these older girls. Some of them were wise enough to see in Betty's character those qualities that were bound to make her a leader in the school activities as she grew older. Besides, she had taken a prominent part already in the social affairs of the Mysterious Four, the Shadyside secret society.

So, with all the volubility and excitement, this undercurrent of change impressed them all, even light-hearted Bobby Littell. Full as Betty's crowd was of expectation of what was awaiting them at Ocean Park, they saw the hour approach for leaving school with no little sorrow.

Would Shadyside be just the same when they came back to it in the fall?

"It is never the same," Miss Anderson told them, with a little sigh. "We always miss the faces of those who do not return, and we must get used to the new faces of those who first enter. I never get used to it myself."

The physical culture instructor was gay enough, however, when they all got into the bus with their hand baggage. Perhaps, more than her young charges, Miss Anderson was glad to throw off the responsibilities of the arduous school year.

"You do make such a splendid shap-er-onge," sighed Libbie, trying to give the word an atrocious French pronunciation. "Suppose we had Miss Prettyman!"

"Now," said Bobby, briskly, "let us talk of nothing but pleasant things. Why remind us of Miss Prettyman, who is, of course, a dear if you only know how to take her."

"I never could take her myself," groaned Betty.

They were a gay party as they rode to the station. And there they sighted six boys in citizens' dress doing a war dance around a heap of baggage which they evidently considered necessary to take by hand—bags, racket-cases, jointed fishing-rods, and a number of queer-shaped packages that might contain any number of surprising things.

As the Shadyside bus drew up at the platform the girls heard this anything-but-mellow chant, undoubtedly originated by the Tucker Twins, and uttered at the top of the boys' voices:

"'I'm Salsette born!
And Salsette bred!
And when I die—
I'll be Salsette dead!'"

This chant was repeated several times and then came a funny little whistle which was peculiar to the boys from the military academy. Then the boys went through a very amusing mock manual of arms.

"I don't see why we Shadyside girls don't have a battle-cry," murmured Libbie, stumbling out of the bus. "It's so romantic."

But Bobby was determined not to approve whole-heartedly of anything Tommy Tucker originated. "It's the only way to keep that boy

in hand," she had confided to Betty Gordon more than once. "Praise him, and you spoil him."

Now she watched the six stamping around the pile of baggage and shaking their canes with the Salsette colors tied to the handles as though they were spears, while they repeated over and over that senseless rigamarole, and she shook her head.

"What do you call that dance?" she demanded sternly. "The Mohawk Shimmy? I think it is disgraceful. Where do you think you are going —to the South Sea Islands?"

"Fancy taking a Mohawk Indian dance to the South Seas," put in her sister Louise.

Bob Henderson refused to take offense. He broke into laughter at Louise Littell's comment.

"Well, we are going south—or southeast. And we are going to the sea. And let me tell you there is the dandiest kind of island off one end of the boardwalk down there. It's romantic-looking enough to suit Libbie. All rocks, and ocean caves, and spouting rocks, and a grim old thing on the top that looks like a gallows where they used to hang pirates."

"O-o-oh! Pirates!" was the general chorus. "Pirates!"

"Only it isn't," continued Bob, grinning. "It's an old beacon which hasn't been used since they built the lighthouse near by. But, anyhow, Rocky Island is romantic to look at."

"Now, young people," Miss Anderson broke in, stepping out of the bus last of all, "I hear the train. Tickets——"

"All here, Miss Anderson," said Bob politely, coming forward with his hat off to greet her and with the bunch of tickets in his hand. "I have seen to that. And the trunks from Shadyside are checked together with ours."

"You are a general," declared the teacher, with a smile, for she liked Bob.

The other boys became immensely polite and deferential too, and unusually formal, for the idea of having a chaperone travel with them rather shook their usual spirits. Miss Anderson soon put them at their ease, however, although she did look askance at that wonderful pile of hand baggage.

"Don't you think you could have shipped some of that, Bob Henderson?" she asked.

"Most of that," said Bob dryly, but with sparkling eyes, "is what we forgot."

"But it seems you haven't forgotten any of it," the lady said a little grimly.

"We forgot it until after the trunks went off last evening. Funny how much a fellow will collect around him at school. My steamer trunk was packed solid; but I have two suitcases, a bag, and a bundle in that pile."

"Talk about girls traveling with a truck load

of baggage!" cried Bobby, with scorn. "You boys must all be Beau Brummels."

"Oh," said Timothy Derby in his matter-of-fact way, "there aren't so many clothes. Oh, no. But I've so many books——"

"Now, Timothy!" exclaimed Norma Guerin, "are you going to do nothing but read books all your vacation?"

"Oh, no. But suppose we shouldn't have any books to read? Wouldn't it be awful? And on rainy days?"

"Stop it!" ejaculated Bobby. "He is considering rainy days already. Don't look for anything but sunshine on this vacation, Timothy Derby—don't you dare!"

Tommy Tucker had sidled toward her and now whispered in Bobby's ear:

"Don't worry about his books. He packed a bottle of red ink with them, anyway. And I had a bottle of chili sauce that I couldn't get into my bag; so I stuck it in his. When we got here, Jim, the driver, tossed the bags off and I heard something smash when Tim's bag landed. So, it doesn't matter which bottle is broken, the books won't be very inviting when we get down to the shore."

"Oh!" cried Bobby, giggling. "Does he know it?"

"No. Why tell him? I don't believe in mak-

ing people feel unhappy beforehand. It will be bad enough when he opens the bag," and the dark twin grinned impishly.

The route to Ocean Park was such that the party must change at one point. Bob had secured seats in the chair car for Betty's party to this junction; beyond that they would have reservations in the sleeping car and would arrive at the well-known seashore resort early the next morning.

It chanced that the party boarding the train at Shadyside numbered only Betty and her friends and Miss Anderson, the party having waited for Miss Anderson over one day after the closing of the school. The few passengers already in the chair car possibly might not have selected for their own comfort quite such an active and noisy party as Miss Anderson's twelve charges.

They all tried to get together; but there was not much selection of chairs, and some of the young people were at one end of the car and some at the other. Libbie and Timothy managed to sit together, as usual. Miss Anderson had a chair across the aisle from them. But the remainder of the crowd were at the other end of the car.

They were on both sides of the aisle, and mixed up with other passengers; and the hand baggage had to be put up anywhere there was

room for it. Some of the adult passengers took this influx of boys and girls good-naturedly and offered to exchange seats so that the friends might be all together.

One couple at this end of the coach, however, displayed no desire to be friendly in the least. The man was very prim looking and had a sharp, sneering face, while his companion was overdressed, wore too much jewelry, and looked at the young folks as she might have stared at so many dirty urchins playing in a mud puddle.

She actually sniffed, wrinkling her powdered nose, and said rather loudly to the man facing her:

"Horrid! I did really think, Chawles, that we would have some privacy in this car. Schoolboys! Ha! Their boots always smell of blacking, and it is so hot in here, anyway. I never will travel again without our private car, Chawles."

"Chawles" appeared to take quite as much offense as the woman. He, too, stared at both boys and girls as though he thought they had no real right on earth.

"Cracky!" whispered Bob in Betty's ear, "don't you feel awfully put down and sort of overwhelmed?"

"No, I don't!" ejaculated Betty. She was just a little angry. "No matter how we behave we

can't behave worse than they do. And we're only in fun."

"I wouldn't want to do anything to bring Miss Anderson down on us——"

"You'd better not," Betty broke in.

Just then the bejeweled young woman said something to "Chawles," who pressed the button for the porter. That uniformed functionary appeared on the jump. He must have had previous experience with the haughty couple.

"Porter," said "Chawles," "start that fan back there. It will at least keep the atmosphere stirring."

"Humph!" muttered Teddy Tucker, "we must have brought an awfully bad smell into this car with us. Or was it here before we came?'

"Hush!" commanded Louise Littell.

It was a hot day, and the revolving fans at either end of the car helped a little. But Teddy's remark seemed to have put an idea into his twin's head that the cyclone from the fan aided in bringing to a point.

"Oh, cheese!" ejaculated Tommy, using his favorite exclamation, but under his breath. "Ted, did you notice that fellow sitting near the door of the next car when we got aboard? The little, dumpy, red-faced man eating his lunch out of a shoe-box?"

"That little German?"

"Exactly. Know what he was eating?" The twins stared at each other. They often seemed to think of the same things and in exactly the same way. They did not have to evolve specifications and a diagram when it came to mischief.

Tommy raised his eyebrows. Teddy nodded understandingly. Then the former got up and strolled to the door of the car and a moment later disappeared.

CHAPTER VII

AN ODOROUS GALE

BETTY and Louise tried to keep the crowd straight, and that not alone because of Miss Anderson's presence. They were not afraid of Miss Anderson; they knew her kind heart too well and were quite aware that she had fun-loving propensities. But after a year under school discipline, to say the least, Betty Gordon was more sedate than she previously had been. Probably Bobby Littell never would be sedate.

Betty's influence with her dearest chum, however, was very great. Although Bobby was the older, Betty's was the stronger character. And Louise being "such a quiet puss," as Bobby agreed, together they kept the latter in more or less proper bounds.

But who could keep in check such a pair of wild ones as the Tucker twins? Nor did Betty dream of what those two scapegraces had evolved in their minds. Betty and the other girls tried to ignore the impolite couple across the aisle. Chat-

ting and laughing and joking, as long as there was no rough play, should not have offended "Chawles" and his bejeweled lady.

"I don't suppose they were ever as young as we are," Bobby had whispered almost at first. "My mother says that there are some people who seem to have been born already grown up."

But the girls were not minded to give much of their attention to the offensive couple. And the boys were only bent on teasing the girls or chattering among themselves. Outbursts of laughter and repartee, however, when they occurred seemed to annoy "Chawles" and his wife enormously.

"I'd hate to have such a disposition as those two have," observed Winifred Marion Brown in disgust.

"They must have caught it early and it struck in," said Gil Lane. "Hullo! where's Tommy been?"

The dark twin just then came into the car. He was preternaturally grave, and when one of the Tucker boys was solemn it was time to "'ware ship," so Bob always said. It did seem as though those two brothers were more than half mischief!

As Tommy closed the car door he reached up and turned off the small fan that "Chawles" had requested the porter to start. These storage battery fans do not produce much of a gale, but the

streamers of gaily colored paper the porter had attached to this one had been fluttering as though they were blown by the breath of a cyclone. As the fan stopped Tommy Tucker slyly smeared what was on a bit of paper in his hand the whole length of the strips of paper!

"That boy has stopped that fan, Chawles!" complained the bejeweled lady.

"Chawles" turned around sharply and shouted:

"Hey, boy! What are you doing there? Start that fan again and let it alone!"

"Oh, yes, sir," stammered Tommy Tucker, in much apparent fear.

He touched the switch again and left the fan buzzing while he disappeared into the men's washroom, where he removed what stuck to his fingers with some difficulty. When he strolled back it was Ted who burst out with:

"I say, Tom, your boots smell horrid. I wish you'd buy some scented shoe polish."

Some of the others began to sniff a bit, but innocently enough. Gil Lane remarked:

"There is a funny smell in here. Don't you get it, Bob?"

Bob fixed an accusing eye on Tommy Tucker.

"What did you do?" he demanded in a whisper.

"Me?" asked the dark twin with appalling innocence. "Why pick on me?"

His brother was stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth and looking out of the window.

"Chawles, there is a horrid smell in here," said the nervous lady across the aisle, who was directly facing the cyclone from the fan. "Dear me! I positively refuse ever to travel again in a car with hoodlums."

"I think she ought to have a private railroad to travel on, don't you?" whispered Bobby rather angrily.

But then she got a whiff of the odorous gale and put her handkerchief to her own nose.

"What is it?" gasped Norma and Alice Guerin in chorus.

"It ought to be reported to the Board of Health, whatever it is," giggled Bobby, who guessed now that the Tucker twins had been guilty of causing the offensive odor. But Ted had recovered his gravity and both he and Tommy shed perfect innocence about them in both look and manner.

"Gee!" exclaimed Gil Lake, in an undertone. "There must be something dead in this car."

"Chawles!" exclaimed the troubled lady, angrily. "I cannot stand this! Call the porter. I insist that we go to the farther end of the car. Tell him to take our hand baggage down there."

Her husband pushed the button again, and in ran the porter. "Chawles" gave his orders.

"Yes, sah! Yes'm!" stammered the porter. Then he got a straight blast from the fan and almost staggered. "Ma soul and body, we must be goin' by a soap fact'ry, sah!"

But he grabbed the light baggage and headed the procession down the aisle. Tommy jumped up, stopped the fan, yanked off the paper streamers, and took them into the men's room; then he started the fan again and slid into his seat with a most benevolent smile on his face.

"Now Derby and Libbie can come up here with us," he said. "Nothing like having the whole bunch together. We can have more fun."

When the exchange had been made and they had all settled, giggling, into their places, Betty demanded sternly:

"What was it, you naughty, naughty boy?"

"Oh, cheese!" muttered Tom, grinning.

"That is no answer," declared Betty.

"Oh, cracky!" ejaculated Bob Henderson, suddenly guessing the meaning of the dark twin's observation. "I see. It was cheese. Where did you get it?"

"Fellow in the day coach had some cheese sandwiches. And it was ripe—no doubt of that. I got him to sell me one," whispered Tommy Tucker, in high delight.

"You are a horrid boy!" declared Louise sharply.

"All's fair in love and war," declared Ted promptly. "And we got rid of that couple, didn't we?"

"Don't for pity's sake let Miss Anderson hear of this," commanded Betty severely. "What do you suppose she would say?"

"She's too far away to get the odorous odor," chuckled Tom. "But I thought that darky would faint."

"Soap factory!" ejaculated Ted, and hid his face behind his handkerchief again.

After that Betty kept watch more strictly over the too exuberant twins. She confessed to Bobby that she always felt that she was traveling with dynamite when Tom and Ted were of the party.

They reached the junction where they were to change trains without further trouble and all tumbled out on the platform, the boys loaded like pack burros with their own luggage and that belonging to the girls and Miss Anderson. The connection for the Ocean Park train was not very good, for they had more than an hour to wait. But there was a good restaurant in the station at this junction and they trooped in there and surrounded two tables.

"I think it's lots of fun traveling," sighed Alice Guerin. "I shall never get tired of it, I know. And just think, Norma! A year ago we never supposed we would be able to travel much."

For, thanks to Betty Gordon's finding the treasure of Indian Chasm, told of in "Betty Gordon at Boarding School," the financial circumstances of the Guerin sisters had vastly changed within the past nine months.

"We have a great deal to be thankful for," said Norma. "Thankful to Betty and Bob," and she smiled gratefully at the two leaders of the expedition.

Miss Anderson effaced herself just enough to make the young folks forget that she was supposed to be in charge of them. She was "good fun," but without doubt her presence subdued the more reckless expressions of animal spirits among the twelve.

When they boarded the Pullman at last the berths were already being made up, and at Miss Anderson's behest the entire party went immediately to bed. While the train rolled through the less mountainous country toward the coast the party from Shadyside and Salsette slept only to dream of the delights awaiting them at Ocean Park.

Betty and Bob, or indeed any of the party, might not have bestirred themselves that next morning until the Pullman was sidetracked in the railroad yard at Ocean Park had it not been for a sudden and startling noise which began at an unseasonable hour.

Betty awoke to find that the train had halted. She peered through the window beside her and saw that they had reached no station, but were halted on a flat, or swamp, which was smothered in mist. But that startling droning sound that was awakening all the passengers in the car came nearer and nearer. It now seemed almost overhead.

"What is it? What's happened?" were the cries uttered by several of the girls.

"What's gone wrong?" shouted Gil Lane from somewhere down the aisle.

"It's another train! There's going to be a collision!" shrieked Alice Guerin.

"It's a motor-car!" declared W. M. Brown.

"It's a motor all right," suddenly sang out Bob Henderson. "But it's in the air. A plane of some kind. Look out, fellows, and see if you can glimpse it. I bet the pilot's lost in this fog and he doesn't know how close to the ground he is sailing."

"Jimminy!" ejaculated Ted Tucker. "Suppose he hits this old Pullman?"

Upon that suggestion there arose a chorus of shrieks, and almost everybody bounced out into the aisle.

CHAPTER VIII

SX-43

BETTY GORDON was not the only one who ran up the window shade beside her berth to see out into the fog-covered flat on which the train had halted. All up and down the car was a confusion of voices, though more than half drowned in the roar of the heavy motor of the flying machine.

Suddenly Betty shrieked at the top of her voice.

"There it comes! Oh, look at it!"

"I see it," cried Bobby, who hurled herself back into the lower berth beside Betty.

The misty figure of the great plane loomed through the fog, and it was barely skimming the tops of the cat-tail rushes a few rods beyond the railroad fence.

"Tell him to stop! Tell him to stop!" cried one of the other girls. "Can't he see this train standing right here?"

Whether the pilot did see the train or not, the nose of the plane suddenly lifted, and sweeping in a wide half circle the great machine slid past the stationary Pullman.

"It's a seaplane," cried Bob Henderson. "See it, Betsey? I never was so close to one before. There! Get the marks on the under side of it?"

The train suddenly started forward with a jerk. The seaplane sailed up and up, over their heads, but did not pass out of sight too quickly for Betty to note the marks Bob had called their attention to.

" 'SX-43,' " repeated Betty. "I saw the letters and figures as plain as plain. Did you, Bob?"

She came back into the aisle, having got into her robe and slippers.

"That's just what I made it. That pilot was mighty reckless, wasn't he? He'd been in the bog in another second if he hadn't shot her up again. Cracky! But I'd like to go up in one of those things."

"Oh, Bob! Not really?"

"Sure I would," Bob declared with continued warmth. "It must be funny to look down from up there in the sky."

"Not so funny, I guess," drawled W. M. Brown, "if you happened to be spinning down, ready to bump into the ground like that fellow was."

"Maybe he was just cutting capers," Bob said, grinning.

"And he might cut them when you were in the

plane," sighed Betty. "No! Nobody shall hire me to go up in one of those things."

"Pooh!" cried Bob, with some disdain even if it was Betty whom he derided. "You know we'll see a lot of those planes down here at Ocean Park. The Atlantic Aviation Corporation has a station just north of the town beyond the cove and Rocky Island. They will let you go up for a little while for twenty-five dollars——"

"That puts a stopper on your aviating desires, Bob," laughed Bobby. "Now, if it was twenty-five cents for a ride, maybe we would all go."

"Not me," repeated Betty firmly.

There was scarcely time after that for the young people to make their toilettes before the train pulled into the station at Ocean Park. Naturally, the excitement about the seaplane that had so nearly collided with the train had awakened everybody in the Pullman and the coach was emptied very quickly when the train came to a standstill.

Out into the train shed swept the young people and through the gate to the station and the street, the boys again laden with their multitudinous bags and parcels. Bob led the way and had a quick eye for an expressman who would take the baggage, trunks and all, to the bungalow which, the boys and girls believed, would be "the scene of some high old times."

The station was some distance to the rear of the shore front and the boardwalk. This latter, Bob had told them, was bordered by the principal hotels, casinos, moving picture houses, stores and important pleasure concessions. He led them now in the opposite direction, heading inland, for the bungalow was so near that they were to walk.

"Smell that salt fog, Betsey?" he said to Betty. "Do you taste it? Nothing like that ever reaches Washington—or Shadyside. This is a sure-enough sea fog."

"It was thick enough for that seaplane to come near crashing into the train, Bob," said Betty. "But it is disappearing now, thank goodness."

The fog was shredding away under the beams of the morning sun, and before they reached the bungalow it was lovely and sunny. The girls expressed their delight at the appearance of the house; but Betty started to run for the porch when she saw Mr. Gordon standing there.

"Uncle Dick! You dear!" she cried, flinging herself into his arms. "It seems an age since I saw you. You grow handsomer all the time!"

"You'll make me vain, Betty," he replied, laughing. "And how are you all?" They crowded around him in a vociferous group. "So this is Miss Anderson, of whom I have heard so much? I expect we are going to have our hands full with this wild mob."

Miss Anderson smiled, and she could smile very sweetly.

"Don't cross your bridges before you come to them, Mr. Gordon," she said. "I promise you that we shall manage between us. This is a lovely place. I am grateful for your invitation here. Most vacations I have spent at a teachers' home, where one positively can never get away from talking shop. Here I believe I shall even be able to forget that Roberta Littell is my pupil."

"Oh! Why pick on me?" cried Bobby, as the others laughed. "Am I so awfully, awfully worse than the others?"

"You certainly are when it comes to the use of English," laughed Miss Anderson.

They separated into little groups and went tearing through the house and all around it. All but Betty and Bob, for they went more sedately through the bungalow with Miss Anderson and decided upon the rooms to which the guests were to be appointed. There was an elderly and kind-looking cook and housekeeper, a man servant, and a parlor and chambermaid. It was a well appointed house, much better furnished than the usual summer bungalow.

In an hour the baggage was allotted to its proper rooms, the girls had unpacked and the boys had grabbed out of their possessions such clothing and other things as they needed first. Unpack?

Why do that until a fellow needed something particular?

There was no wail from the room Timothy Derby shared with W. M. Brown. And the other boys wondered at that, for they were sure Timothy would open his bag of books the first thing and find them either bathed in red ink or mussed up with chili sauce. Nothing happened, and lurking outside the door the other boys pounced on Winifred Marion when he first appeared.

"What's he doing? Hasn't he found it out?" demanded the twins.

"Did it muss up the poetry much?" Bob asked.

W. M. chuckled in great amusement. "The joke's on you, Tommy Tucker," he whispered. "Neither the red ink nor the sauce bottle broke. You know that flask of Bohemian glass in which he had pebbles each initialed and dated, picked up at the home of every poet and author he has ever visited, and he has made pilgrimages to all he could reach, don't you?"

"And that's what broke?" groaned Tommy.

"Yes. He's pickin' 'em up now. No use waiting for him, for there are dozens of 'em, and they've rolled in all directions. He'll be an hour at that job," finished W. M. Brown.

So they ran off, with those of the girls who were ready, to take their first look at the boardwalk and the ocean rolling in so smoothly and so

gently breaking against the granite bulkhead. There were a few people fishing off the rocks; there were several power boats and sailing vessels off shore; on the sheltered bathing beach the endless throng of bathers was already gathering, and most of the concessions stacked between the hotels and picture houses and restaurants were opening. But it was still early in the pleasure-seekers' day.

There were roller-chairs to be hired; but the young folks did not want to test these on this occasion. They walked or ran the entire length of the boardwalk.

"Just to get our bearings," Bob said.

Returning, Betty and the others, including Timothy Derby, joined the party and the exploration was extended to the northern end of the walk.

"So that is the pirate island, Bob?" cried Bobby. "That thing on top of it does look like a gibbet, doesn't it? Sort of."

"How romantic!" murmured Libbie placidly.

"Cat's foot!" muttered Bobby. "Oh, see!" she added in the next breath. "There's another seaplane. Rising right over the island and coming in-shore, just exactly as though it were jumping a hurdle."

"It's the same one," Betty cried. "The SX-43. Dear me, Bob, do you suppose that pilot is going to smash into something again?"

"He didn't smash into anything this morning," replied Bob, laughing. "See him swoop down! There! He's taken to the water like a great duck. Cracky! I'd like to be in it."

But Betty was very sure she did not crave such an adventure. She was quite fascinated, however, as were the others, by the sight of the great flying machine.

CHAPTER IX

THE BUNGALOW CANOE CLUB

THERE was not much done that first day. At least, none of the "dizzy dozen" (of course, Tommy Tucker originated that phrase) seemed to think much was accomplished. Yet not for one minute had they been still, not even at meal time.

Still, and all, they made plans. Oh, hundreds of plans! And they came to one real decision. In that pretty cove behind Rocky Island was a boathouse—more than one, in fact—and the man owned many canoes. Bob discovered that they could be hired for the season, and with Mr. Gordon he went over there and looked over the stock and picked out six of the best.

They all had sails as well as paddles, and Uncle Dick arranged for a boatman who would teach the boys the use of these sails. All of them and most of the girls could paddle a canoe, of course; but sailing these canoes on rather rough water was different from sailing the canoes on the lake between Shadyside School and Salsette.

"We'll have a bully time," Teddy Tucker declared. "And we've got to have a club, of course."

So, after dinner that evening the Bungalow Canoe Club came into existence. Timothy and Libbie were put on the rules committee by acclamation and were left in the library to their own devices to formulate those rules while the rest of the crowd danced to the music of a talking machine in the big living room.

Uncle Dick was advisory council in the formation of the rules, and his principal rule was that no member of the Bungalow Canoe Club should go out in any craft without first taking the advice of one of the experienced boatmen regarding the weather.

"You young folks know little about a 'sea spell' and are more or less heedless of weather signs," Mr. Gordon said. "So I insist that you have professional advice regarding this matter."

Otherwise, neither he nor Miss Anderson interfered with the young folks' plans. Before breakfast in the morning the whole crowd prepared for an outing on the water, and as soon as the meal was dispatched the twelve set out for the boathouse, which was fully half a mile from the bungalow.

Behind the line of hotels and other important buildings which faced the boardwalk, and between

it and the residential colony where the bungalow was situated, were several buildings and scaffoldings devoted to "rides" and "chutes" such as are common to seaside resorts.

These more "rowdy" entertainments were not allowed on the boardwalk proper. But they offered, just the same, a possibility for amusement when other things failed.

"And there's quite a good-sized tent show yonder," Bob Henderson explained, pointing out the canvas "top" with its strings of gay banners. "It's something like a circus. We'll have to take that in some day soon."

"Look! That must be part of the circus right now," Gil Lane cried, pointing up the side street that led toward the big tent. "See what's coming? Or do I see something the rest of you can't?" and he grinned broadly.

"Oh!" cried Bobby, clasping her hands. "There it is again! The zebra! Girls! Do you suppose it is the same one? Can that be Sally Cutler?"

"That is surely Sally," agreed Norma Guerin.

"What fun!" Betty cried. "Mr. Si Cutler must have got a concession down here at Ocean Park. Now we are going to have stirring times! Couldn't help it with Sally——"

"Oh, girls, that is her!" interrupted Bobby, and started on a run to meet the trotting zebra which was approaching along the narrow street. It

drew easily behind it a little four-wheeled wagon with high canvas sides on which was painted in the gaudiest of colors:

CORWIN'S CANINE CIRCUS
and
Cabinet of Curios

THE GREATEST AGGLOMERATION OF STRANGE PEOPLES IN THE WORLD

Marvelous! Educational! Romantic!

"Well, sure enough that last word will catch Libbie," Louise remarked, while the entire party waited and stared at the approaching turnout.

"Can that be Sally?" repeated Bobby.

For without doubt the farm girl was vastly changed in appearance from what she had been when the Shadyside girls had formerly met her. She drove the zebra with red reins and his harness was cream colored. She was dressed just as gaily as the zebra. She wore some kind of princess frock of gray trimmed with gay bead embroidery and further picked out with gold braid put on in all sorts of curlicues, and she wore a white hat with a great red plume on it. If this was the outfit Sally had mentioned as having seen in a Brack-

enbury emporium, the storekeeper must have been glad to get rid of it at any price.

"Why, Sally Cutler!" gasped Betty, arriving beside the advertising wagon. "Is this really you?"

"Didn't know me at first, did you?" demanded Sally proudly. "This don't look like gingham and a sunbonnet, does it? My!" and she sighed with ecstasy.

"I shouldn't have recognized you had it not been for the zebra," admitted Betty.

"Yes, I reckon I look pretty fine," said Sally, with satisfaction.

"Do you belong to that circus?"

"Pop bought into it. There's a bunch of dogs, and the fat lady and Skinny—that's what I call the skeleton—and Mrs. Michaels, the lady with the beard, and her son, Ben, the tattooed boy—he's awfully nice—and some others. Must be seen to be appreciated—like it says on the handbills. You'll come to the show?"

"Of course we will," agreed Betty, as the other young folks gathered around. "You remember these other girls, Sally?"

"Oh, yes," said Sally, nodding and smiling broadly.

"And these boys are our friends. We are all staying down here for a while," went on Betty, in

explanation, and repeated the names of the amused boys.

Sally acknowledged the general introduction cheerfully. She was not in the least bashful.

"You bring 'em all to the show," said Sally to Betty. "It's only a quarter each. That'll make three dollars for the till, and every little bit helps. I sell tickets to both afternoon and evening shows. We've got one of those shooters in the cage. All I have to do is to take the money and make change and press a button for the ticket to shoot out. Oh, Corwin's Canine Circus is up to date."

Everybody was laughing and asking questions by this time. If the boys were inclined to joke Sally a little, Betty and the girls took her part and squelched them most properly.

"Oh, Sally!" Betty cried, "did you ever hear anything of those two young men who stole your uncle's car?"

"They never nabbed 'em," answered Sally. "But Uncle Phin got his car back. It cost him two hundred dollars to do it. Now he's got it chained in his barn, and with a padlock on the chain. Guess 'twon't be stole again."

Betty did not tell Sally at that time of the trick the thieves had played on Dr. Bennett at Shadyside Station. Sally promised to leave her ticket-selling job long enough, when the crowd came to the circus, to introduce them to the freaks—espe-

cially to that "awfully nice" Ben Michaels, the tattooed boy.

"For the love of Mike!" exclaimed Bobby, as the zebra started on again. "Sally certainly is enthralled by the tattooed boy.

"I think it's real romantic," murmured Libbie.

"Oh, Libbie!" ejaculated her cousin. "Maybe it isn't. Not as romantic as you think. Perhaps the tattooing is put on with a stencil and a brush," and Bobby giggled.

"Never mind," Norma Guerin said. "Sally evidently thinks a great deal of her Ben Mike. I'm curious to see him."

They started on again for the boathouse after Sally had passed with the zebra and, arriving there, were soon out in the six canoes—two in each craft. Betty and Bob were together, and at the start Bob spread the two leg-o'-mutton sails, for there was a good breeze. Betty tended the forward sheet and Bob looked after the other and steered with a broad-bladed paddle. They scooted across the cove towards Rocky Island and were far ahead of the rest of the club.

"I'd like to see the other side of that island," Betty said, curiously eying the heaped-up rocks with the gaunt structure on the summit that had once held an iron cage for firewood.

"Not in this canoe to-day," Bob put in quickly. "Did you hear what the boatkeeper said? Likely

to be squalls any time. We can't go outside the cove."

"Oh, I suppose we must obey him," said Betty.

"Better," rejoined her friend, with a grin. "Uncle Dick has accepted our word. As members in good standing of the Bungalow Canoe Club——"

"Oh!" interrupted Betty, "there is one of those things. They don't have to trouble about squally weather. They are far above that."

The seaplane to which she pointed hung in the air like a bird on its pinions. Bob squinted up at it.

"Can't see whether that is the SX-43 or some other. Cracky! See that!"

"Why! It turned right around. How reckless!"

"Gee! I'd like to try that," cried Bob Henderson.

"You wouldn't either! You say that just to make me—make me scared."

"Shucks, Betty! How can I make you afraid when I'm down here and the plane is up there?" the boy demanded. "Whoo! Do you see that?"

"Oh!" gasped Betty Gordon. "He's falling! He'll be killed! Look!"

"Drop your sail!" commanded Bob, quickly. "Loose the sheet. His own was being payed off

swiftly, and the tri-cornered sail came down with a swish. Betty's followed.

"We can't watch that and sail this canoe—that's sure!"

"He is falling, Bob!" wailed Betty, her head tipped far back to follow the gyrations of the plane.

"He's spiraling," said Bob. "See! He must have some control of the machine, after all."

"But he's going to land smash into the water, Bob."

"That must be softer than landing on the land. Suppose he hit the island——"

"Bob!" shrieked the girl. "He is going to hit us!"

"Nonsense!"

"He is! He is! Or, if he doesn't hit us directly he will capsize us. Oh, Bob!"

CHAPTER X

THE DANCE AT THE CAMPEACHIE

THERE was good reason for Betty's terror. The shadow of the descending seaplane was fairly upon the canoe. Nor was there time to seize the paddles and get away from the point of danger, smothered as the light craft was in the sails.

None of the other canoes were near, nor any other craft. But Betty could hear the other girls screaming and the boys shouting warnings to Bob to get out of the way.

"Cracky, Betsey! we're in for it," exclaimed poor Bob. "Uncle Dick will blame me for this."

Betty did not see how he could be blamed at all. But there was no time for any response on her part.

The engine of the great plane had died; but the rush of its descent was almost deafening. It was a terrible thing to sit there under that shadow and realize that nothing they could do would save them.

She understood that the pilot of the plane could

do nothing to help himself or them. Down, down the machine rushed, and in another thirty seconds the canoe must be overwhelmed.

But suddenly and at seemingly the very last moment, the nose of the spinning plane canted up, and the great machine swerved. The next moment it took the water with an enormous splash and the end of the right wing passed over their heads.

"Low bridge!" yelled Bob, and they both threw themselves forward, while more than a bucket of water splashed over the side of the canoe.

It was a miracle that the canoe was not swamped. It was a wonder, too, that the wing had not collided with the two short masts to which the sails were bent. The waves caused by the landing of the plane tossed the canoe like a chip; but Bob, seizing the dipper from its beckets, bailed like mad.

"Oh, Bob! Oh, Bob!" cried Betty.

"We're not drowned yet," shouted the boy in return. "Whew! what a drop that was. I wonder how it feels to come down in a plane like that."

"I think you must be crazy!" gasped Betty.

"Grab your paddle and push ahead," commanded her companion, his face very red now, but his eyes dancing with excitement. "Say! this is some adventure."

In a minute or two he seized his own paddle and they got the canoe away from the more turbu-

lent water. By this time they could see the pilot and the mechanician with him. The former tore off his hood and goggles and turned in his seat to look at the canoe.

"I say!" he shouted, grinning, "do you want all the road? That was a close call, do you know?"

"I think he is hateful!" ejaculated Betty, but the pilot did not hear her.

The other canoes were being paddled furiously toward the scene; but Bob worked their own craft nearer to the nose of the plane, and spoke to the pilot before the rest of the party arrived.

"When you had the whole cove to fall into, you might have given us a little more leeway, don't you think?" he said, answering the grin of the pilot.

"You are a pretty brave pair," said the man. "Sorry I scared the young lady. Something's gone wrong with my engine." The mechanician was already at work on it. "I really couldn't do better than I did. But if you two will come over to the station any day, I'll take you up and show you that I usually do better than this. It sha'n't cost you a cent."

"I wouldn't go up for worlds!" gasped Betty.

"Haven't any worlds to give away, Miss," laughed the pilot, and then introduced himself as Captain Winkler. "I really was not reckless. It

was an accident. If you think I am reckless, you should watch Jasper Heddick in the SX-43. He's the reckless one."

"We saw the SX-43 as close as we wanted to yesterday," Betty said seriously. "He came near knocking our train off the rails. I think flying is an awful business!"

"So you won't come over and try it with me?" Captain Winkler asked, still much amused.

"I will," Bob declared. "I'm crazy to go up."

"You certainly are," murmured Betty.

"It is a bargain, young fellow," said the captain. "How about it, Joe? All right again?"

His companion said it was, and the captain arranged his head-gear, waved his hand, and the engine began to thrum. The plane started toward Rocky Island, took the air again about two hundred yards away, and skimmed upward, barely clearing, it seemed, the summit of the island, and rushed out to sea.

The other canoeists arrived in great excitement, and for a time Betty could scarcely answer their inquiries. The other boys were as enthusiastic as Bob, and when they learned that the latter had been invited to take a ride with the flying man at some later date, they could only feel envy.

Betty got over her fright after a time. But she insisted that they go home at once. She would not hear of canoeing any more that day.

"I like excitement as well as the next one," she told Bobby. "But enough is as good as a feast."

So they spent the afternoon on the boardwalk. In the first place they hired three chairs for the girls and three for the boys and were wheeled to and fro for an hour. But after having seen what there was to see in this way they all craved action and began to dip into the more exciting amusements of the place.

There was a fine ride, where one went through a tunnel with real water under the boat and then shot up and over a great framework that brought the boat around finally to the starting point. They had a couple of rounds of this and then went out on the steel pier where the crowd was, and ate ice-cream while listening to the band.

"To-morrow we will begin our bathing, but we'll take it in the morning or soon after lunch, for there is so much going on here on the pier and the boardwalk that we don't want to miss the fun," Betty planned. "Isn't that right?"

"You make the plans, Betty. You're always so good at that," Bobby agreed. "We'll do just what you say."

The others were quite satisfied too; but Tommy Tucker wanted to know when they would go to that circus.

"For I want to see that Ben Mike that the girl in the satin dress thinks so much of," he grinned.

"Do you suppose they will let us feed the living skeleton?"

"You bad boy!" exclaimed Bobby, laughing. "Do you think it is a menagerie, and that you can poke peanuts and popcorn into his cage? If we take you to that Curio Cabinet you and Ted had better behave."

They did not visit the show that evening. When they returned to the bungalow Mr. Gordon met them with news that was most agreeable.

"Blacks and pumps, boys, for this evening. And you girls put on your best bibs and tuckers," he said gaily.

"As long as they are not the Tucker twins we must wear, I'll forgive that word," said Bobby.

"What is it, Uncle Dick?" cried Betty. "A party?"

"Sort of. There is a dance for charity at the Hotel Campeachie, the biggest hotel here. I have bought tickets for us all, including Miss Anderson and myself. And two big cars will come for us, for I know that you girlies won't want to get your dancing shoes wet."

"Isn't he a dear?" said Norma Guerin, as the girls trooped up to dress after dinner. "Your Uncle Dick, Betty, knows just how to treat young ladies. I feel really grown up."

"He is the best uncle that ever was," announced

Betty, with pride. "I am sure there never was such another."

The Campeachie was at the southern end of the boardwalk and there was a great ballroom. The crowd and the lights and the band delighted Betty and her friends.

The twins did not neglect to dance with the girls, and Bob and Gil Lane found some other nice boys of about their own age and introduced them to Miss Anderson, who insisted on knowing every partner her girls had.

Naturally in a mixed assembly like this some care must be exercised in choosing new acquaintances. Betty might have had a different partner for each number on the program; but she was a girl who had some choice herself in the selection of people to talk with. She noticed several men in khaki on the floor and thought at first that they were soldiers; but when Bob brought one of them to her she recognized Captain Winkler, the airman, who had given her such a fright that morning.

"He's met Uncle Dick," explained Bob, quite excited, "and he wants to apologize for scaring you so, Betsey. Just think!" he added, "Captain Winkler was in France and belonged to the Lafayette Corps before we got into the war, and is an ace, mind you."

"I should think," Betty said, looking into Cap-

tain Winkler's smiling face with some doubt, "that after that you would never want to see a flying machine again."

"But, you see, when the war was over flying was the only thing I could do. I left college to learn it. And I am too old to go back to school. So I went to work for the Atlantic Aviation Corporation, who can make use of us flying men. May I have the pleasure?"

There was something very nice in having so old and gallant a man dance with her. Betty admitted it to herself. And the air pilot danced beautifully. But she did not think she could ever really forgive him for frightening her so!

As he led her to Miss Anderson afterward, they passed a knot of other flying men near the door. One turned and glanced in Betty's direction, but with no recognition in his expression. The girl stopped, troubled.

"Who is that?" she asked of Captain Winkler.

"Oh, that fellow? He's one of us. I mentioned him this morning. He and his mate, Nick Olmer, have just recently been taken on. He is Jasp Heddick and drives the SX-43."

"'Jasp'? 'Jasp'?" murmured Betty, in much trepidation. "Why, I have seen him before!"

CHAPTER XI

A MOMENT OF PERIL

CAPTAIN WINKLER did not notice Betty's surprise and agitation when she saw the face of the pilot of the SX-43. He laughingly told her:

"He is a daring bird, that Jasper Heddick, believe me! He and his mechanician would slice the icing off a chocolate layer cake, he flies so close to trouble. I promise to be careful when I take your friend, Bob, up in my machine."

"I wish Bob wasn't so crazy to go with you," murmured Betty.

She continued to look back at Heddick, whose face she very clearly remembered as that of one of the motor-car thieves she had seen on Stoneville Hill several weeks before. She was confident of her identification. He was one of the men who had stolen Mr. Phineas Cutler's automobile.

She wondered if the mechanician Captain Winkler spoke of was the other thief. And should she speak right out here and now and reveal what she knew about the fellow with the very unpleasant face?

Betty Gordon had felt considerable fear of the two rascals when she had first seen them. She and her girl friends had made up their minds that the fellows were dangerous. Besides, Sally Cutler's story had borne this feeling out. Although Betty was not usually a coward, she was just a little afraid of what Jasper Heddick might do if she publicly accused him. Had her uncle or Bob been by she would have had more courage.

Nor could she tell Captain Winkler of her trouble and suspicion. After all, she should have proof of her accusation. She wondered if the other girls would remember the man's face? If they did not, Sally Cutler, Betty was confident, would remember him.

So she thanked Captain Winkler for his attentions and returned to Miss Anderson's side, where she remained throughout the next dance, thinking the situation over. The more she thought of it, the more serious it seemed in Betty's judgment.

If Jasper Heddick and his mate were working for the Atlantic Aviation Corporation, she doubted if they were trustworthy employees of the concern. If they had stolen an automobile, why wouldn't they steal a seaplane?

"Only, I don't see what they could do with one if they stole it," Betty thought. "Surely they could not sell such a thing without being immediately apprehended. Why," and she was in-

clined to giggle at the thought, "a hydroplane on one's hands would be as much trouble as that elephant Mr. Silas Cutler was bothered with."

However, her suspicions—indeed, her certainty of the fellow's identity—did not cause Betty much amusement. She was excited and continued to feel a little frightened. The longer she considered the matter, however, the more she was sure that she had better keep it secret until positive of her proofs that this pilot of SX-43 was the automobile thief.

"He cannot really do much harm with that plane," she decided. "I will wait until the other girls see him, and especially Sally Cutler. She will surely know again those men who tried to cheat her father before they stole her uncle's car."

Having come to this determination she tried several times during the evening to show Jasper Heddick's face to one or another of her girl friends. But each time the fellow slipped away or other dancers got between them.

"Who do you mean, Betty?" Bobby demanded, quite exasperated. "There are so many of those airmen here I can't tell one from another. And why do you suppose I have ever before seen the man you mean?"

But Betty did not want to tell her that. She wanted Heddick's face to appear before her chum just as unexpectedly as it had before her own

vision. If Betty told Bobby who he was, the latter could identify him all too easily. It was a serious crime of which Betty secretly accused the man, and no mistake must be made in corroborating her own belief.

She would wait for Sally Cutler to see him.

The fellow disappeared from the ballroom early. Nor did Betty Gordon allow her surprising discovery to spoil her good time at the Campeachie. She and her girl friends had seldom received more attention in their lives than on this occasion. Wearing pretty frocks, dancing to lovely music, and with "perfectly splendid partners," to quote Bobby, the six felt that they had arrived at the heights of bliss.

Mr. Gordon danced once with each of the girls, nor did he neglect Miss Anderson. Naturally the Shadyside physical instructor was a graceful woman and danced well. Betty declared that the teacher and Uncle Dick made the most attractive couple on the floor.

The party from the bungalow remained until midnight, and then went home in taxis like real "grown-ups." The girls at least could scarcely go to sleep, they were so excited. And Betty, after the others were quiet, found that she had too much to think of to find rest in what Bobby jokingly called "the arms of Murphy."

Being a particularly healthy girl, Betty was not

used to lying awake. She fidgeted and tossed, but tried to keep quiet for fear of waking Bobby in the other bed. Then she grew thirsty, and there was no water in the carafe on the stand. It seemed to her as though she must have a drink.

So she slipped out of bed, shrugged on her robe and put her feet into her bedroom slippers. She needed no light, for there was a moon. She meant to go to the bathroom on that floor and get a drink of water.

Without making any noise she opened the door and silently passed into the hall. There was a window at either end of the hall, and although the middle of the passage was in shadow, the moon radiated sufficient light through these windows to satisfy Betty's needs.

But when she returned from the bathroom, having drunk a glass of water, she was halted by a movement in the shadow at the head of the stairs. She did not cry out, but for a moment she could not move!

There was somebody there! Who or what it was she could not at first imagine. Then, perhaps because of her previous thoughts of the automobile thieves, the suggestion came to her that a robber had entered the house!

The incidents of the evening had made her nervous. Suppose this was an armed burglar, and he had spied her from the place where she had seen his movements in the dusk? The thought

might have frightened the bravest person in the world.

She believed herself to be in peril. For all she knew a great pistol in the hand of the marauder was aimed at her breast. This chilling thought so struck the power from the girl's limbs that she almost sank to the floor, too alarmed to take another step and powerless to speak a word.

CHAPTER XII

THE FEAST OF THE HOBGOBLINS

BOBBY LITTELL would have called it "a scarceful moment," and that ghostly movement in the deep shadow at the top of the stair chilled Betty to her finger-tips.

Then, luckily, before she could scream or run away, she realized that the figure was going away from her instead of approaching her. It had begun to descend the stair.

Thus encouraged, but with violently beating heart, Betty crept toward the stairs and peered over the banisters. A faint band of moonlight entered through the stair window, and through this band of silver the figure passed. It now seemed even more ghostly, for Betty thought she could see the moon's ray *pass right through the descending form.*

This, however, was an illusion. The darker figure, seemingly with flowing robes about it, went on and reached the bottom of the flight. Then as it turned toward the rear of the house Betty suddenly realized who and what it was.

"Libbie!" she murmured, feeling almost faint with relief. "She's walking in her sleep again. Some time that girl will be the death of me!"

She did not want to wake Libbie suddenly. Libbie's aunt at Fairfields had warned all the girls against doing that. And, truly, while they were at school the plump girl had given very little trouble in this way. Her aunt had been sure that her somnambulistic feats would gradually wear off.

But there she was, thought Betty, at her old tricks! The girl ran hastily down the stairs to overtake Libbie. And as she reached the bottom there was a sudden "swish!" behind her and a whisper reached her ear:

"Look out from under!"

Betty knew Bob Henderson's voice too well to be much startled by it. She glanced up to see him gliding down the banister, astride, in pajamas and bathrobe.

"Bob! What are you doing here?"

"Heard a door creak. Poked my head out of our room. Saw two ghosts. Followed to the head of the stairs. What's on the docket? I bet you girls are hiding something from us poor chaps. What is up, Betsey?"

"That is Libbie," whispered his girl chum. "She's walking in her sleep."

"Get out! She had her eyes open when she passed my door."

"But, Bob, she must be sleep walking! What else should she be doing out of her bed at this time of night?"

"What are you out for?" he chuckled.

"I couldn't sleep and went for a drink of water."

"Gee!" gasped Bob. "Libbie's going to the kitchen. Bet she's after something more substantial than a drink of water."

Bob led the way to the pantry from which they could watch the figure of the plump girl wandering about the big white enameled kitchen. She opened the doors of the icebox and looked within, and Bob squeezed Betty's hand and chuckled. Then she approached the safe in the coolest corner of the kitchen, opened a lower door, peered into it, and finally squatted down on the floor, Turkish fashion, and reached in for what she wanted. Betty and Bob then came out of hiding.

"Well, Libbie Littell!" exclaimed Betty.

"Is that you, Betty?" asked Libbie, with her mouth full. "This delicious lemon meringue pie! They asked me to have a second piece at dinner, and I couldn't eat it. But when I woke up and thought of it—well! I couldn't resist the temptation. Have some?"

Bob burst into laughter, but smothered it with a

regard to the sleepers in the house. Betty was a little inclined to scold.

"You are bad enough, Libbie," she said, "when you walk in your sleep."

"I don't!"

"Well, you used to. And I thought you were at it again."

"I never was wider awake," declared the hungry girl.

"But before I recognized your sylph-like form," said Betty, her good-nature returning, "I was sure you were a burglar."

"A burglar!" squealed Libbie.

"Hush! Yes. I got to thinking if that man should come here——"

"Betty! Who are you talking about?" Bob demanded curiously.

"Why—er—Bob! Libbie! Who do you suppose I saw at the dance last evening?"

"Why, 'most everybody that is anybody at Ocean Park," said Libbie reflectively, nibbling a bit of flaky crust.

"So they say," drawled Bob. "Who was the particular person you mean, Betty?"

"One of those awful men who stole Sally's uncle's automobile," said Betty seriously. "Don't laugh, Bob. It was the one we girls heard called Jasp. You remember, Libbie?"

"I don't remember what he was called. And

I wouldn't know him again if I met him in church," declared the plump girl confidently.

"You won't be likely to meet him there," said Betty, with some warmth.

"Cracky, Betty!" cried Bob, "are you sure of this?"

"Hush! Don't wake up the house. Yes, Bob, and I couldn't sleep for thinking of it." She proceeded to recount the incident at the dance, revealing how Captain Winkler had pointed out the pilot of the SX-43 to her. "And he is that Jasp who was one of the automobile thieves—Jasper Heddick. I am sure of it, Bob."

"Who else saw him?" asked the boy practically.

"I did not know what to do. He went away before I could make up my mind. And, anyway, you couldn't identify him. Nor would Uncle Dick."

"And Libbie says she can't," remarked the boy. "Perhaps the other girls would not know him again. Are you sure, Betty?"

"I could never make a mistake about that horrid fellow," she declared.

Bob began to chuckle again. "You made a mistake about the car. Remember how that Dr. Bennett and his friend looked when the sheriff ran them down?"

"Oh, don't talk!" exclaimed Betty. "I was

right then about the license number. You know I was, Bob Henderson."

"Well, that's all right. Don't get sore, Betty. What we want to do is to look this seaplane pilot up and make sure."

"And you would better be careful," said Libbie placidly, while she inelegantly licked the last crumb of the pie from her fingers. "It's wicked to accuse anybody of anything when they didn't do it. Look at your saying I was walking in my sleep."

"Humph!" ejaculated Betty, with some sharpness. "If you eat any more you won't be able to walk at all to-morrow. Come on up to bed."

" 'The feast of the hobgoblins,' " chuckled Bob, wiping his own mouth. "Better have a piece of cake, Betty. It's scrumptious."

"I'd never get to sleep at all if I ate like you two," declared Betty.

"Believe me," replied Bob, rising, "more people are kept awake by empty stomachs than by guilty consciences."

"How many stomachs have you got, Bob? Are you a camel?" Betty asked, as she led Libbie away.

The next morning Betty and Bob had a conference with Mr. Gordon about the pilot of the SX-43, and he, too, seemed to consider that Betty might be mistaken in her identification of the man.

"He is engaged by the Atlantic Navigation

Corporation in a responsible situation," said Mr. Gordon, "and it would never do to make a mistake. You can see that, of course, Betty?"

"But I am sure, Uncle Dick!" cried the girl.

"And yet you have nobody to corroborate your opinion."

"Bobby says she is sure she would know him. And the other girls——"

"I don't see but we will have to wait until the girls do see and recognize him before we can make any move," her uncle said decidedly.

"When I go over for my ride with Captain Winkler I'll look those fellows up and try to learn more about them," put in Bob.

"Oh, Bob! you don't mean to take a sail in that airship, do you? Uncle Dick, don't let him," begged Betty.

"Why, Betty, I'm not sure that I wouldn't like to try it myself," her uncle answered, laughing at her.

"Dear me! you are as big a boy as Bob is," cried Betty, but not saucily.

"Anyway, Bob shall go if he wants to," said Mr. Gordon, smiling. "And if he sees this Jasper Heddick and his mate I hope he will observe them narrowly and get a good description of them. Then we will see."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Betty, for she was not at all pleased by her uncle's decision at this time.

However, there was so much to take up the minds of the young folks at the bungalow, so much fun in prospect, that Betty could not long be cast down. They had agreed to go surf bathing that morning, and the bungalow not being very far from one of the beaches, they dressed in their bathing suits at the house and walked down to the shore covered by their raincoats.

It was a perfectly safe beach; but there were guards, and ropes staked out at either end of the beach, and two big rafts anchored a little way off shore. There were many small bathhouses too; and Betty and her friends had scarcely arrived and checked their coats with a caretaker when who should appear from one of these bathhouses but Sally Cutler.

When the girls sighted her they giggled. They were all interested in the girl from Stoneville, and there was no unkindness in their hearts, but Sally did have such atrocious taste in dress!

"That bathing suit is a scream!" gasped Bobby Littell. "Did you ever see one like it, Betty?"

"Such frills and furbelows," observed Louise. "I don't believe it was ever made to go into the water. It is just a freak."

"It is home made," Alice Guerin announced. "And perhaps it was made by the freaks she tells us of—the fat lady and the bearded lady."

"It's funny," admitted Betty. "But I wouldn't

have Sally's feelings hurt. You speak to the boys and make them behave, Louise, that's a dear," and she ran over to meet Sally.

"Oh, Betty!" Sally cried. "I'm mighty glad to see you folks here. I hoped you would be around this morning. I've got my new bathing suit. We just finished it after the last show last night. Ben Michaels says it is stunning."

"It certainly is," admitted Betty, in all seriousness.

"I hope so. It cost enough," said Sally, preening. "And Ben is here."

"The tattooed boy?" asked Betty.

"Yes. He wanted to have a regular boughten bathing suit like those your boy friends have got on. But you know, that wouldn't do. It would spoil his value to the show. So his mother made him one. Here he comes now."

The door of a bathhouse opened and there stepped forth a well built boy with a round, brown face and a smile that really made the face attractive, although Betty did not think that he looked very intelligent. However, it was his dress, too, that attracted the most attention.

Instead of the usual trunks he wore black tights down to his ankles. Below them Betty could see a pattern of red and blue marks like an anklet. His wrists were marked in the same way, but the sleeves of his jersey came to his wrists and it was

so high in the neck that very little of the pattern of tattooing showed up there.

"Mrs. Michaels didn't want him to go bathing," whispered Sally. "But I begged so that she had to let him. Isn't he a nice boy?"

"He certainly is," agreed Betty warmly. "Do introduce me."

Sally was proud to do this. Ben was a bashful boy, and although he must have been several years the senior of the boys in Betty's party, he seemed so simple and modest that Bob Henderson and the other Salsette boys were much more at ease than was the young fellow from the show.

They were all reasonably well acquainted very soon and dashed into the water together. When Sally's suit got wet it seemed to shrivel up and clung to her thin frame in a most astonishing way. Betty and Louise managed to make the boys behave pretty well, however; and if they were more hilarious than they might otherwise have been, neither Sally nor her friend guessed what made the party so gay. Betty resolved to say nothing to Sally for the time being about the aviator, Jasper Heddick. Uncle Dick's words had cast a little doubt into her mind, now that the spell of the man's presence was removed.

They could all swim, even Sally. The tattooed boy was a very strong swimmer, and when they raced to the nearest raft he was the first to climb

aboard it. And he dragged Sally along with him.

Somebody had to look out for Timothy Derby, too; for without his spectacles Timothy was rather helpless. Libbie did not leave him, for if she did, Tommy Tucker said, Tim might be swimming around in circles all the morning, unable to spy the raft.

They all spied something soon after beginning their play about the raft, however, which was startling. The life-saver who was supposed to row about in a boat just beyond the rafts had gone inshore for something. The sea was quite calm in fact, and who would expect trouble of any kind on such a quiet day?

But Bobby suddenly screamed as she poised, ready for a dive seaward from the raft. Her cry was plainly one of fear, and instead of diving properly she splashed clumsily into the water close to the raft.

"What did she say?" demanded Betty, who was in the water some ten yards outside the raft.

Ben Michaels was nearest to her, with Sally clinging to his hand. They were all three treading water.

"She seen something back of us," Sally declared, trying to look behind. "Must be something— Oh, my gracious! What is that?"

Bobby bobbed up just then, grabbed the edge of the raft, and managed to repeat her cry:

"A shark! A shark! Oh, do come in, Betty, or he'll get you, sure!"

Betty Gordon twisted around where she was in the water, while Ben and Sally struck out for safety. Betty saw something—a blue and white body of seemingly enormous size, and to all appearances it was bearing down upon her from the open sea. Shark or not, it was some marine monster, and Betty was quite as terrified by its appearance as Bobby had been.

CHAPTER XIII

NOT FAST COLORS

THE tattooed boy made sure of Sally's safety, and paid very little attention to anything else. It was true that the farm girl could not swim very well; but afterward Betty considered that he might have shown some interest in Betty's own safety, as she was almost within reach of his hand when Bobby uttered her despairing cry of "Shark!"

Betty was confused and frightened by her first glimpse of the monster bounding over rather than through the waves. It came on with a good deal of the motion of a galloping horse. But Betty had never thought a shark was so round and clumsy-looking.

She sank under the surface, feeling quite helpless but knowing enough to keep her mouth tight shut. When she bobbed up again with her ears ringing from the submersion, the great, fat, pig-like body of the sea monster was almost upon her.

Betty Gordon heard her mates shrieking, and she caught sight of a boat being pulled rapidly toward her. But it seemed to her that nobody could reach her in time to aid. The great teeth with which she knew a shark was armed must almost instantly snap upon her shrinking body. One snap, and all would be over!

Then she suddenly discovered that the brute had no teeth. At least, it had no such wide mouth and horrid rows of fangs as those she expected to behold.

Indeed, it had a snout-like head, and it came plunging on, rocking up and down like a small boat in a heavy sea, and if such a creature could be said to have a good-natured face, that was what this strange animal possessed.

"Why," thought Betty, although she could not say it aloud, "it can't be a shark at all! What in the world is it?"

A man was standing up in the small boat, one of the guards, while another rowed. The standing man shouted to her:

"Dive, Miss! The porpoise won't hurt you unless it falls afoul of you by accident. Dive, I tell you!"

Betty could not dive, but she let herself sink again and it felt to her as though she went down to a tremendous depth. At least, before she had come up again it seemed to her that she had re-

membered everything she had ever read about porpoises.

The beast had gone on, passed the raft, and turned his head out to sea again when Betty arose beside the boat and the guard pulled her in. She was glad to get out of the water. The fright she had suffered had really weakened her for the time being.

"That crazy fish has been fooling around this beach before," said the guard. "He's harmless, but he might bump into a swimmer and do some damage."

"It—it's a cetacean," gasped Betty, "like a dolphin; and some people say it changes color when it dies. And they call it 'the hog-fish'; and—and —oh, do take me to the raft!"

"I guess you were scared, Miss," said the guard, staring at her.

"Who wouldn't be? Oh! Here's Bob."

Bob had come from the shore side of the raft just as soon as he could, and the Tucker twins and the other boys were close behind him.

"Although what any of you could have done to beat off that big pig of a fish I don't know," Betty said, when she had got her breath and had regained her self-possession. "I am very much obliged to you," she added to the guard. "But if it had been a shark you never could have saved me from him in the world."

This was a self-evident truth. The guard should not have left his station with the boat beyond the raft until he was relieved. However, the young folks did not report him and during the rest of their bathing hour they dived shoreward from the raft and did not venture into the open sea beyond it.

"Isn't Ben brave?" Sally kept whispering into the cap-covered ears of the other girls whenever she got the chance. "I know I'd 've sunk right down and had to walk ashore if he hadn't towed me in. Dear me, how scared I was. I'm acquainted with lots of show animals—zebrys and camels and elephants and them; but there wasn't any shark in that Hannigan Circus that pop had left on his hands, and I wouldn't know how to manage a shark."

"You've got nothing on us," Bobby told her. "I guess your tattooed boy is all right. But he might have given Betty a hand, too."

"I should have sent Ben Michaels back after Betty just as soon as he got me to this raft if the guard hadn't rowed out there."

"Humph!" muttered Bobby. "By that time poor Betty would have been inside the shark, if it had been a shark."

However, as the adventure turned out to be a sort of joke, there was a good deal of laughter over it in the end.

"And who's afraid of a porpoise?" demanded Teddy Tucker.

"I didn't see you rushing out there to drive it off, Ted," remarked W. M. Brown.

"I went as quick as you did, all right," retorted Ted.

"I think you all did your best," put in Betty. "Naturally, everybody was frightened."

Secretly she thought that Bob Henderson was the only boy who had shown much courage; but she was a peacemaker by nature and as the trouble was all over, why discuss it?

That is, they thought all the trouble was over. But when the party went ashore to lie on the sand and sun themselves, the boys suddenly set up a mighty shout. They were all looking at and pointing to Ben Michaels, Sally Cutler's friend.

"Look! Look!" shouted Tommy Tucker. "What do you know about that!"

"My eye!" yelled Ted. "The pattern's come right through."

The others stared, and then there was not one of them save Sally who could refrain from laughter. Ben Michael's black tights and jersey had shrunk tightly to his limbs now that he was wet, and all up and down their length showed a faint scroll-work pattern of red and blue!

"The colors aren't fast!" gasped Bob, rolling on the sands in an almost breathless condition

from laughter. "Look at him! Look at his feet, will you?"

Ben turned a fiery red. But at that his face was no redder than his feet. The red ink ran more freely than the blue and one could imagine how wonderfully blotted the whole body of the "tattooed" boy must now be after his hour in the ocean.

Unable to bear the laughter of the crowd he made for his bathhouse and disappeared. Sally, after showing a little vexation, took the matter quite philosophically.

"Shucks! His mom will have to use the stencil and ink brush on him again. Course he ain't really tattooed. You wouldn't want him to be if you once saw him in his show trunks. And if 'twas really pricked into his skin it would never come off.

"But that ink Mrs. Michaels uses is supposed to be fast and needs a preparation she gets at the druggist's to take it off. It's a job to stencil that boy again, and I bet she won't let him come in bathing a second time."

"Tell us honestly, Sally!" cried Bobby Littell. "Are the bearded lady's whiskers glued on, or are they natural?"

Sally grinned elfishly. "Well," she admitted, "Mrs. Michaels don't let the audience pull 'em! But she's a real nice lady, ever so much nicer than

the fat woman. And don't you think Ben's an awful nice boy?"

Whether they thought him so or not, the party from the bungalow agreed to attend Corwin's Canine Circus and Cabinet of Curios that very evening. The occasion proved to be one long to be remembered by Betty Gordon and her friends and schoolmates.

CHAPTER XIV

CONVINCING EVIDENCE

THE Bungalow Canoe Club made another cruise that afternoon, and this time the twelve young folks swarmed ashore on Rocky Island, which defended the great cove from the open sea. It was much longer than it was wide, this island, and looked like a whale's hump; only much too large for any whale that ever swam the sea.

"Even Jonah's great fish was nothing compared to this for size," Bobby declared. "Do you suppose there are pirate caves, and all that, on this island, Betty?"

"Shouldn't be surprised," replied her chum, with a laugh. "Only the pirates are all dead and gone long ago."

"Never mind. I'd like to see a cavern where pirates used to hide."

"You are as romantic as Libbie," said Betty.

"Only I haven't her appetite," chuckled Bobby wickedly. "Let's go up and see the gallows."

"Bob says it only held an iron cage to burn wood in," Louise observed.

"Don't tell me!" exclaimed her sister. "I don't care for Bob's information. He's a spoil-sport, that's what he is. They hung Captain Kidd, or somebody like him, in chains on this island, I am sure."

It was the general opinion that the island was an interesting, if rather barren, place. There were honeycombed places in the rocks at the sea's edge, where each wave that rolled in spouted up like a geyser through the apertures from below and sprayed those who looked down the black shafts. They found some small, sand-bottomed caves, too, into which the sea ventured at high tide. And the fishing for bass off the inner shore of the island was wonderful.

They carried home enough fish to supply the table at the bungalow for two meals. Some of them gathered mussels and netted a few shedder crabs, for they had come to the island supplied with what Bob Henderson called "the weapons of the chase." They sailed back in ample time for dinner, sunburned, happy and tired.

Not too tired, however, to remember their promise to Sally Cutler. Dinner revived them, and Mr. Gordon and Miss Anderson agreed to accompany the young people to Corwin's Canine Circus. Uncle Dick did not care to have them go about at night alone; at least until they were more familiar with Ocean Park. The resort,

however, was well policed, and as a whole the people that visited it, even for the day, were quiet and respectable.

Too, Mr. Gordon and the Shadyside teacher desired to see the performing dogs quite as much as the younger folks wished to meet Sally Cutler's friends in the side shows. Moreover, Betty and her friends had talked so much about Sally Cutler that Uncle Dick at least was curious about the girl from Stoneville.

Sally was ensconced in the ticket cage, glorious in her gaily beaded frock, when the party arrived. She offered to pass the entire party of fourteen visitors into the show free of charge, for if she came of a thrifty race she was not mean. But Mr. Gordon would not hear of that.

"No, Miss Sally," he told her, having been introduced to the young ticket seller. "That would never do. You are here, I take it, to represent your father's interests."

"Yes, sir. Pop thinks I can keep a sharp eye on things down here, and he comes over on Sundays to examine the accounts."

"Then you must do your very best for him," Mr. Gordon smilingly said, laying down a bill to pay for the tickets. "I hope he will do well in this venture."

"If we don't have much rain it will be all right. And the freaks will get a stake for next winter.

Pop's shrewd. He pays them according to the crowds they draw. If the weather is bad they mustn't look to him for their money."

Standing near by was a black-browed man who was one of the Corwins. The other Corwin was a woman in white fleshings who put the dogs through their paces in the ring show. Sally called to the man to take her place in the ticket booth, and then led the way into the side show.

Betty and her party had arrived early. By a private entrance Sally ushered them into the "freak tent," which, however, was never called that in the hearing of the curiosities on exhibition. The fat lady, the extremely thin Romeo who courted her, the extremely pleasant-looking but rather startling lady with the black, bushy beard (was that beard natural?), Ben Michaels in spangled trunks and close fitting jersey, cut so as to reveal the wonderful scroll-work in red and blue that ornamented his body again, a pair of little folk—man and wife—whose voices were very squeaky and who, in their evening clothes, looked like a pair of French dolls, a bushy-haired Circassian girl ("Look!" gasped Bobby at first glimpse, "she'll never need a permanent wave in that bunch of hair!"), and an "armless wonder" who did everything by using his toes that another man could do with his hands and fingers.

There may have been some other "curios"; but

naturally Betty and her friends were most interested in the four performers who had been talked about so much by Sally Cutler. Perhaps the fat lady did not weigh more than half of the six hundred pounds that the sign over her head declared, but certainly she was the biggest woman the girls had ever seen.

"Take care, Libbie!" whispered her wicked cousin, Bobby. "You'll soon be like that."

"Sha'n't!" ejaculated Libbie, not quite pleased. "I'm losing flesh."

"Yes," said Bob on her other hand. "I notice that you've fallen away to a ton."

But the fat lady was very proud of her flesh. Just as the terribly bony skeleton was proud of his appearance.

"Indeed," Mr. Gordon remarked afterward, "it could be nothing but conceit that would urge these people to display their personal peculiarities for money."

"But I don't know what other job that poor fat woman could take," remarked Betty, "if she has to earn her living."

"How about Ben's mother?" Bobby asked briskly. "She could shave, couldn't she?"

However, they all agreed that Sally's peculiar friends had been very kind and pleasant to the visitors and all had insisted upon presenting each boy and girl with individual photographs of them-

selves in costume. Mr. Gordon paid for these unobserved just the same!

The dog circus was well worth the price of admission. Madam Corwin evidently loved the animals, and they seemed to do her bidding as though they liked the fun of it. Of course, there was a clown dog—a poodle—that appeared to be very stupid and unmanageable, but which at the end of the show leaped into Madam Corwin's arms and was carried around the ring by her to bow and bark at the audience. He proved his affection for his mistress by licking her cheeks.

The first evening show was over at last, and Betty and her party trooped out. Just as they came within hearing of the ticket cage they heard Sally Cutler's shrill voice raised in anything but a pleasant manner.

"You two scalawags! Come back here! I've a word to say to you! Come back!"

Her voice rose to a high pitch as she proceeded, for evidently the "two scalawags" were not minded to accept her urgent command to return.

"Oh, Bob!" cried Betty, who found Bob Henderson next to her in the crowd. "Oh Bob! Somebody must have got tickets from Sally without paying for them."

"Or passed a counterfeit bill on her," suggested Bob, and he began to shoulder himself through the throng to the front of the ticket cage.

Betty kept right along after him. Not many of her party realized what the trouble was about, and they hesitated to get into the milling crowd. Betty and Bob sighted Sally almost at once. Her face was very red and she was shaking a clenched fist behind the gilded bars of the cage and standing up so that she could see over the heads of the people in front of her.

"Bring 'em back!" she was shouting. "I'll show 'em what's what! The mean cheats! If my Uncle Phin ever catches sight of them two fellers he'll horsewhip 'em well."

"Oh, Bob!" gasped Betty.

"Bet it's those two motor-car thieves," declared Bob, quite as quick of comprehension as Betty herself.

"That Jasp Heddick and his mate who fly the SX-43," said Betty. Then shouted to Sally: "Who were they, Sally? Those fellows who stole your uncle's car?"

"Hullo, Betty," said the excited ticket seller. "I believe that's who they were. And I thought they was some kind of soldiers in uniform and was going to pass 'em in at half price. The scalawags!"

Of course, if the two men were Heddick and his mate, they were now far away. Uncle Dick came up and heard all about it. Sally could not stop selling tickets at this time; but she promised to

come to the bungalow in the morning and describe to Mr. Gordon the appearance of both the young men she had just seen.

"I will really have the matter looked into. We will get the constable to come and hear the description of these fellows. If Sally's story coincides with yours, Betty, the evidence may be strong enough to cause the local authorities to apprehend the men."

"Just think!" Bobby Littell cried, "we may be mixed up in a police case. Our Betty is a regular detective!"

But Betty began to feel that the matter was too serious to joke about.

CHAPTER XV

A GLORIOUS FOURTH

SALLY CUTLER ran over to Marigold Bungalow in the morning, arriving before breakfast. She was still excited over the event of the evening before, yet she confessed now, upon reflection, to Mr. Gordon and the constable that she was not so positive as to the identity of the two men who had run away from the ticket booth of the circus.

"Maybe they are and maybe they ain't," she sighed. "I've been thinking about that Jasper fellow. He used to have a mustache. He didn't have one last night."

"Well, well, young woman," said the constable, rather put out by this statement. "We must have direct evidence, or a direct accusation. I can't go and arrest these fellows unless I have good foundation for my belief in their being thieves."

"We understand that, Mr. Pomfret," said Uncle Dick, mildly. "But here is my niece——"

"And she says the same," interrupted the constable, rubbing his head with an evident hope of getting a new idea out of it. "She isn't sure."

"No-o," confessed Betty. "I thought I was. But when I came to think it over——"

"That's just like me," put in Sally. "I was thinking of it all night. Maybe they ain't the fellows who stole Uncle Phin's car. Then they'd have a case against us, wouldn't they, Mister, if we arrested them?" she asked the constable.

"You are a smart girl," said Mr. Pomfret. "They might make me trouble anyway if I arrested them without just cause. If you folks will swear to a warrant, I will undertake to serve it. That is the best I can do."

"Uncle Dick, it might not be them," said Betty.

"I wish pop or Uncle Phin could take a look at 'em," muttered Sally.

"When will your father be down here at Ocean Park again, Sally?" asked Mr. Gordon. "I understand he comes once in a while."

"Pop will be here next Sunday if nothing worse happens to the old cow. She ate some wilted wild cherry leaves, and has been as sick as she could be. But she'll be either dead or better; come Sunday."

"As the fellows accused had a personal interview with this girl's father," commented Pomfret, the constable, "I think we'd better wait for him to see the suspects. Meanwhile I will look up their record with the Atlantic Aviation Corporation.

They could not have been taken on to ride one of those planes without references."

So it was decided to wait until Sally's father came. As the two young men who later had stolen the automobile had first tried to pass a worthless check on Silas Cutler, the latter would remember them more clearly than his daughter, or than Betty and the other girls.

"Anyhow," said Sally, inclined to be disappointed, after the constable had gone away, "I told the watchmen about the circus to keep their eyes open for them fellers."

"That was quite right," said Mr. Gordon. "If they are really the two thieves, they will know that you identified them, and they are not likley to appear openly about the boardwalk—in the daytime at least. But at night——"

"They might steal some of Corwin's dogs. They are valuable animals," Sally said.

"Suppose they stole the fat lady!" burst out Tommy Tucker.

"Behave, Tommy!" commanded Bobby, but giggling at the idea.

Mr. Gordon wrote down, at Sally's dictation, a detailed description of the two automobile thieves whom they suspected to be Jasper Heddick, pilot of the SX-43, and Nick Olmer, his mechanician. He had already put on paper as clear a description as Betty had been able to give

of Heddick. She did not remember so well the looks of the other man.

"Now, Bob," said Mr. Gordon, "when you go over to the hangar of the Atlantic Aviation Corporation, try to see these two men and memorize a description as well. We will compare the facts as we find them, and then, if Mr. Pomfret can make no move we will go over his head to the state or county police."

"Let us see, Bob—when are you going to visit your friend, Captain Winkler?"

"The day after the Fourth," replied Bob. "We fixed that at the dance. He is going to be mighty busy over the Fourth, so many new people come just for that day or the day before."

"Oh, dear me!" sighed Betty. She did not like to think of Bob's going up with Captain Winkler.

The thought of the Fourth of July, however, interested them all immediately. Ocean Park was going to have a civic celebration on the Fourth.

" 'Safe and sane' is all right enough; but how get up enthusiasm for our Revolutionary forebears if powder be not burned?" demanded Teddy Tucker.

"I wonder," proclaimed Tommy, "what Thomas Jefferson and George Washington and—and Ethan Allen and—and General Lee, and Webster——"

"Daniel or Noah, Tommy?" giggled Bobby, in-

terrupting the twin's passionate flow of oratory.

"Noah? Nonsense! He built the Ark. I'm talking about our own Revolutionary War," said Tommy.

"The Noah Bobby means built the dictionary," laughed Betty.

"Never mind. Both the Ark and the dictionary were awfully dry," drawled Norma Guerin.

"Well, what do you suppose even Noah would have said to celebrating the Fourth with pink lemonade and popcorn? Why, my father used to have a cannon to fire on the Fourth."

"Yes," said Ted, the other twin, "that's how it comes that he has only three fingers on his left hand."

"And you boys want to blow off a leg or an arm or something!" cried Louise. "Mr. Gordon will not allow cannons or guns, I am sure."

"Shucks! You haven't got to blow anything off," explained Tommy. "Dad's accident was just bad luck."

"What does it matter whether it was intentional or an accident?" asked Betty. "Fooling with fireams did it."

"Don't always look on the black side of things," drawled Tommy. "Why don't you be little Sunshine Spreaders?"

"Every cloud has a silver lining," added Ted with a grin.

"You can't prove that," said Bobby, breaking in on this argument. "You don't always see the other side of the cloud, so how can you be sure? Anyway, we may be able to spread sunshine without spreading blown-up boys all about the neighborhood. You'll have to take it out in the public exhibition of fireworks if you want noise and excitement on the Fourth."

There was an ample program for both day and evening fireworks on the main beach and Betty Gordon's crowd did not miss a thing when the great day came. There were "rocking-chair movies" on the beach, too. Uncle Dick secured tickets for everything the young people wished to see, and he and Miss Anderson must have tired themselves utterly in trying to keep up with what Bobby called "this wild bunch."

The twelve did, however, enjoy themselves so unmistakably in running hither and yon from one pleasure to another that Mr. Gordon and the Shadyside teacher must have been very grouchy indeed to have refused their attendance when it was necessary.

But the Fourth was a very long day. It had begun at daybreak when the boys set off several bunches of firecrackers inside a length of sewer pipe behind the bungalow. The explosion was like that of a series of mines on the battle front. There was little sleep for anybody in the neigh-

borhood of the bungalow after that hour unless he were stone deaf.

A crowd of people came by train and motor-car to Ocean Park that day. The boardwalk had never been so thronged in the experience of Betty and her friends. They kept away from the Corwin Circus and side-show, knowing well that Sally Cutler and the tattooed boy would be more than engaged from early morning until late at night.

But they mingled with the crowds on the boardwalk, listened to the bands, saw the dancing on the beach, and Uncle Dick of course got tickets for the "rocking-chair movies." Before the hour appointed for that show, however, the evening fireworks were set off. Those who held tickets for the moving pictures were established in a very good situation to observe all the pieces of fireworks, both the set-pieces and the aerials.

The young folks from Shadyside and Salsette trooped in upon the platform and secured their reserved seats in good season. It was not then dark. The edge of the boardwalk overhead was lined with the people who proposed to watch the fireworks free of cost. All the boats drifting just off shore, and there were hundreds of them, were filled with pleasure parties waiting for the exhibition.

The band was playing upon the steel pier, and the railings from inshore to its outer end were

likewise crowded with spectators. In the dining balcony the illuminated tables were filled with small parties, all laughing and chatting.

Mr. Gordon's charges had eaten dinner before they left the bungalow. Uncle Dick and Miss Anderson were on hand. The lights began to spark out in tiers and patches on the amusement towers and along the fronts of the hotels and of the big concessions. The serpentine rope of colored lights which twisted about the tower of the great carrousel on the boardwalk looked as though it were of living fire.

"Just think! if the man who first discovered that electricity could be made useful only were able to be here to-night," exclaimed Louise. "What a sight this is."

"Hush!" cried Bobby, in excitement. "There goes the first bomb."

"Why do you want us to hush?" giggled Betty, "I fail to understand. We haven't come to hear, but to see—oh!"

The bomb burst far up toward the starless sky. A sprinkle of colored stars blinked for a few seconds, floating down the airways.

"How beautiful!" gasped Libbie.

"Like a poem," agreed Timothy Derby, who sat beside her.

"Yes," remarked Bobby, "just like:

'Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!'

Sure! That certainly is some poem."

"Well," chuckled Tommy Tucker, "even at that they made Timothy say it in school one time. I remember all about it."

"You remember a fat lot," grumbled Timothy. "You're only jealous because you can't remember anything."

"You've got him there, Tim," declared W. M. Brown.

"Hush!" gasped Louise, marveling as did Libbie. "There's another one."

There was a sputter and a swish, a glare of light on the beach, and another bomb, or rocket, started heavenward. It rose only a few yards, however, and exploded prematurely. The explosion was almost deafening, and from the aerial bomb a shower of stars and balls of fire shot in all directions that for half a minute lit up the whole neighborhood as though it were broad day.

The next instant the "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" of the spectators developed into chorused screams of pain and fear. The fire-balls were exploding among the audience in the chairs and even among those people lining the edge of the boardwalk.

Libbie and Louise screamed vociferously. Miss Anderson, practical as she was, cowered in her

chair and put her hands over her eyes to shut out the white glare of the explosions.

One of the fire-balls burst right over Betty Gordon's head. The sparks, white hot, if brief, surrounded the girl as though she had jumped into the middle of a bonfire. She heard Bob shrieking some command or warning to her; but for the moment she could not distinguish what he said through the jumble of other voices and the successive explosions of the aerial bomb.

CHAPTER XVI

AN EVENT OF MOMENT

Bob Henderson chanced to be in a position where he could see better than the other members of his party just what was going on at the spot where the fireworks were being set off. The men in charge were practiced in their art and had taken all the precautions that seemed necessary.

But the fault in this one bomb disturbed all their calculations. Bob saw the great set-piece on its frame that was to have been ignited after the first series of bombs, already afire in several places. The fuses were sputtering between the rockets affixed to the frame. The worst of it was that when these rockets were discharged they would endanger the whole neighborhood much more than did the single faulty bomb.

For standing below the framework of the set-piece was the box in which the remainder of the first series of bombs lay. Another minute and the sparks from the rotating rockets on the frame would, without much doubt, set off all these bombs together!

"Down, Betty!" yelled the boy, first of all. That was the command Betty Gordon scarcely distinguished. "Under the chairs, all of you! Look out!"

Mr. Gordon had no more than sprung to his feet with the exploding stars hurtled about his head, when Bob bounded from the platform and raced toward the framework of the set-piece. As he ran he tore off his sweater, and, reaching the open box just as the fuses began to sputter, he flung the woolen garment over the bombs remaining in the box.

"Out of the way, boy!" yelled one of the men. "You'll be shot all to pieces!"

"Give us a hand here," cried Bob. "You and I can drag this box out of the way."

And they did. While the other employees of the fireworks company satisfied the spectators as best they could that the danger was over, the last star of the bomb having now exploded, the crippled set-piece gave off such color and form as to cause the throng along the boardwalk to utter choruses of "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" The exciting incident was over for them. But on the beach there were several people who had suffered slight burns and many others more than slight shock.

"Where's Timothy?" demanded Gilbert Lane, when they began "counting noses" in the party from the bungalow.

"Where's Libbie?" cried Louise.

"Here we are," responded the timid voice of the latter, and she crept out from under one chair and Timothy Derby "came up to breathe," to quote the giggling Bobby, from under another.

"I don't care!" cried the plump girl, in some vexation, "didn't Bob tell us to get down there?"

"And you obeyed orders like a veteran," said Uncle Dick, although he had to join the general laughter. "Where is that Bob Henderson?"

Bob, rather crestfallen, joined them, and displayed a big hole burned in his sweater.

"That spark came pretty near setting off the box of bombs after all," he said. "But I hate to ruin a perfectly good sweater."

"Bob," said Uncle Dick warmly, "you are a trump!"

"And the ace of trumps at that!" declared W. M. Brown. "I never saw such a fellow. Always doing the right thing at the right time."

"Yes," grumbled Bob. "And losing a perfectly good sweater. I ought to have a leather medal, I ought."

Just the same it was sweet to be praised by his fellows for his self-possession and agility. Bob was not above some little conceit; otherwise he would not have been human.

But he appreciated most Uncle Dick's approval and the secret squeeze of the hand that Betty gave

him. She was proud of him, too; and naturally Bob wanted always to please Betty.

But the next morning, when he set out for the aviation station for his promised ride with Captain Winkler, Betty's approval did not attend his departure. He called her obstinate and would not admit that there was the least danger attending his venture.

Many of the planes were in service that day, and all the morning, whenever they heard the drumming of the air motors, Betty refused even to look out of the window to see if it was "Bob's plane" that was going over. The other girls and boys were continually on the watch, and when they finally shouted to her that Captain Winkler's plane was in sight Betty still refused to look, but remained at her work. She was carefully mending Bob's burned sweater.

"He hasn't any right to risk his life and worry me so," she said to Miss Anderson. "I don't care if Uncle Dick did say he could go. Bob is the only brother I have, and I don't know where I should find another if anything happened to him."

Miss Anderson laughed. But secretly she admired the girl's attitude toward her boy chum.

Mr. Gordon had been called to the city by a telegram early that morning—an unexpected bit of business—and the whole crowd remained at home until Bob returned after lunch.

He came back delighted with his ride through the air, but full of excitement regarding another matter. He had learned a good deal about Jasper Heddick and Nick Olmer, his mate, and had seen and talked with them both. These fellows were not exactly in the employ of the Atlantic Aviation Corporation, as Captain Winkler was; but had leased the SX-43 from the concern and were flying it as a private venture.

"They offered to take me up, too," said Bob. "But I wouldn't trust myself in that machine with them for any money. Captain Winkler says that, although they are experienced, they are the most reckless of any pair of aviators he has ever seen. I bet they are a pair of full-fledged crooks."

"You ought to go and see that constable at once and tell him," said Louise.

But Bob knew the uselessness of that.

"They haven't any idea of going away at once, I guess," Bob told Betty.

Mr. Gordon remained away over Sunday, and on Sunday Mr. Silas Cutler arrived at the Corwin Canine Circus to examine the books of the concern. Sally promptly brought him over to the bungalow. They had first been to the aviation camp.

"But them two fellers are off somewhere in that seaplane," complained Sally. "Pop can't be sure till he sees that Jasper Heddick. He says he

thinks they may be the two that stole Uncle Phin's auto. But that is what Betty and I do—*think*. Constable Pomfret wants to hear somebody that is *sure*."

"Can't blame him. Can't blame him at all," declared Mr. Cutler, who was a man of serious visage but with a twinkle in his eyes that revealed where Sally got her sense of humor. "It is a serious matter to arrest folks without good reason. I was constable myself once and arrested a fellow I thought was a crazy tramp. He turned out to be one of these college professors that go around tapping rocks with a little hammer to see what they're made of."

Mr. Cutler chuckled over his own small disaster. But it was evident that he could not help in the apprehension of the two automobile thieves at this time.

They watched but did not see the SX-43 fly back to the hangar before night, and Mr. Cutler had to return to Stoneville.

"They won't maybe run away before I come down again," was the man's parting words to his daughter and Betty, who accompanied him to the station.

This might have been comforting to the girls had not something—and a most unexpected something—happened that very night. The young folks at the Marigold Bungalow did not hear

about it until breakfast time on Monday morning. While they were all engaged in this meal Sally Cutler, attended by her satellite, the tattooed boy, arrived in great excitement.

"The bank! What do you think! And all pop's and Corwin's money in it that we've took in. Ain't it awful?" stammered the excited Sally.

"What's the matter with the bank?" asked Miss Anderson.

"The Ocean Park National! It's been robbed! Every cent cleaned out of it some time last night! And these silly police will never get it back in the world! What do you know about that?"

"Oh, Bob!" gasped Betty. "Do you suppose——"

Bob stared at her with the same suspicion expressed in his own face.

"Those two scoundrels?" he whispered, and Betty nodded.

"Oh, I wish Uncle Dick were here!" Betty said. "I believe he could do something."

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT FELL FROM THE SEAPLANE

CONSIDERED in the light of reason there was little evidence to bolster up Betty Gordon's and Bob Henderson's belief regarding the identity of the Ocean Park burglars. But then suspicion is fed little by reason in any case. They were so sure that the two men working the seaplane SX-43 had stolen the motor-car of Sally Cutler's uncle that almost any crime that was committed about Ocean Park could be laid in their judgment to Jasper Heddick and Nick Olmer.

They had too much good sense, on the other hand, to undertake to set anything in motion against the two automobile thieves without the sanction of Uncle Dick. And, as it seemed, Sally Cutler was so excited over the fact that her father's money might be lost with the bank funds that she seemed to have entirely overlooked the presence in the vicinity of the two suspicious characters from Stoneville.

"The police," said Sally, with more emphasis

than good manners or good English, "ain't got the sense of a span of hoptoads! That's a fact. They say the watchman that was knocked unconscious with a brick must know more about the robbery than he wants to make out, and he ain't come to his senses yet! I've got a lot of admiration for these police—not!"

"Oh, Sally!" murmured Louise.

"Maybe Mr. Pomfret and the other police are like the singed cat," giggled Bobby. "Better than they look."

" 'Tis likely," declared Sally with scorn, "that you never seen a singed cat. I don't know for the life of me what good a singed cat would be for. There won't be nothing done till the bank gets the city police down here. And they'll do that, I guess."

Sally's news excited the whole party at the bungalow very much, and instead of going down to the cove as they had intended and getting out the canoes, they all trooped over to the bank building and stood around with half the regular population of the shore resort for a part of the forenoon. Rumor scurried about the town and up and down the boardwalk as though chased by an autumn breeze. The burglars had been caught. They had not been caught. At least they were known. They were not known. Constable Pomfret had fought a battle with them

hand to hand. Mr. Pomfret had been shot down by the rascals in attempting their arrest. And a hundred other reports.

"And if Jasp Heddick and his friend are mixed up in it, they have every chance of getting away," said Betty to Bob. "Nobody suspects them but us."

Before the young folks left the vicinity of the bank even Betty and Bob doubted their former suspicions. It did not seem as though Heddick and Olmer could have had anything to do with the burglary, because of what Captain Winkler told them.

The two friends met the gallant aviator on the edge of the crowd. Bob at once asked after the SX-43 and her crew.

"Oh, Heddick and Olmer took her down the coast yesterday to give some exhibitions at a fair they are holding at Alliwell-by-the-Sea. They won't be back until to-morrow," said Winkler.

"What do you know about that?" demanded Bob of Betty when they were alone. "If what the captain says is so, how could Heddick and Olmer have anything to do with the bank burglary?"

This question seemed unanswerable. At least, it seemed there was no evidence to connect the two suspects with the bank robbery.

The Ocean Park *Review* came out that evening with the story of the tracking of the bank burglars

by Constable Pomfret as far as Calloden, where the automobile they had escaped in was abandoned. Later this car was found to have been stolen two days before from a private garage at Calloden. It seemed strange that the robbers should have brought the car back. All trace of them was lost at that town, which was on a branch railroad that tapped the coast towns farther south.

Betty and her friends lost interest in the bank burglary after a time. Something new was turning up every hour to amuse and entertain the bungalow crowd. And, as Bobby observed, if it did not turn up they turned it up!

Uncle Dick did not come home on that Monday, although Betty had expected him. But he sent a telegram which relieved her anxiety and promised to arrive by Tuesday evening.

"Meanwhile," she said to Bob, "those fellows will be able to get away, after having fooled Mr. Pomfret."

"If they are the guilty ones!" grumbled Bob.

"Why, of course they are!" declared Betty, with spirit. "They may have fooled the police by stealing a car at Calloden, and then driving back there. But they can't fool me."

"You're a wonder, Betsey," scoffed Bob, grinning. "How do you suppose they got to Calloden

when they are giving exhibitions away down the coast at Alliwell-by-the-Sea?"

"You'll find," declared Betty confidently, "that the railroad on which Calloden is situated goes to Alliwell, too."

Bob looked it up and then exploded:

"Cracky, Betty! you're as right as rain. You certainly are a witch. And yet they were taking a big chance in leaving the SX-43 unguarded—if they did."

"Burglars and motor-car thieves, I guess, are used to taking chances," was Betty's shrewd remark.

On Tuesday morning nothing more had been learned of the bank burglars. The detectives of the Bankers' Association had taken hold of the matter, it was understood; but perhaps they would discover no more than Mr. Pomfret had.

However, as the robbery did not personally concern the bungalow crowd, it was already "old stuff." After breakfast that morning they trooped away to the cove, clad in boating costume under their wraps—that is, they wore their bathing suits. For paddling or sailing about in canoes is a ticklish business, and they had decided it was much better to wet bathing suits than their other clothes.

The boys had brought fishing rods and nets. They were determined to supply the bungalow

table again with what Libbie called "the fruits of the sea." And she learned that some of these "fruits" have thorns; for in dragging her hand through a patch of seaweed past which Timothy Derby was paddling their canoe, she got hold of a sunfish and it stung her.

"Ow! Ouch!" shrieked Libbie. "I'm burned! What is it?"

"What do you mean, burned?" demanded Bobby, who was near by. "Burned your hand in the water? That certainly is a chemical marvel. We'd better tell Miss Anderson about that; she has a knowledge of chemistry."

Libbie's fingers and palm were irritated, however, and remained inflamed for some time. She was careful about trailing her hand in the sea after that.

The flotilla of canoes was headed for Rocky Island, as there seemed to be more to do there than elsewhere, and the fishing was undoubtedly good. They had scarcely started from the dock, and the little flurry associated with Libbie's disaster with the sunfish was over, when Betty spied a seaplane coming heavily up from the south.

It was several miles away when she first saw it; but somehow she "just knew" it was the plane manned by Jasper Heddick and Nick Olmer. Bob carried a pair of glasses slung in a case over his

shoulder, and Betty borrowed these and gazed earnestly at the approaching machine.

"It's those men!" she exclaimed in a low tone to her partner in the canoe. "It is the SX-43. I felt that I could not be mistaken."

"They are coming back from the fair, then," Bob said. "Well, it proves they have not run away yet, that is sure. If they are the bank burglars they will be in reach at the station when Uncle Dick and Mr. Cutler return."

"If they only return in time!" murmured Betty.

"But, shucks!" added her friend, "we're really not sure those two fellows are guilty—of the bank business at least."

"If we'd been sure and that Pomfret man would have believed us, he could have arrested them on the old matter, and then the bank wouldn't have been robbed," declared the girl.

"If these fellows are the bank burglars," repeated Bob doubtfully.

"Oh, you and your ifs!" exclaimed Betty. "I'm just as sure as sure."

"Well, I feel that way myself—about the bank burglary," admitted Bob. "And yet we haven't an iota of evidence. Only suspicion. And if I am going to be a lawyer when I'm a man I should not begin accepting suspicion as evidence," and he laughed.

The SX-43 winged toward them like some great

seabird. It was flying very low, and as it came abreast of Rocky Island, toward which the canoes were headed, it suddenly swerved inshore and the canoeists could see the two men in the nose of the huge machine.

Something was the matter in the car. Betty was the first to discern it. She screamed, and, dropping her paddle, pointed upward at the plunging seaplane.

"Look there, Bob!" she shrieked. "Is it a fight?"

The two men, the pilot and his mechanician, seemed actually to be struggling among the controls and levers of the seaplane's mechanism! The plane swooped downward and the spectators thought its nose must plunge into the island.

But at the last moment the nose of the huge machine lifted. The seaplane scaled over the hump of the island, missing the structure on the top by only a few yards.

Out of the machine fell an object—just what, the young folks below in the cove could not tell. The girls cried out in unison, and Louise and Libbie covered their eyes.

"He's killed!" gasped Bobby. "He's surely killed, falling on those rocks."

For they all believed that the thing which had fallen from the SX-43 was one of her crew.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EXCITEMENT CONTINUES

THE great seaplane seemed to leap into the air above the summit of Rocky Island, and Betty and her friends expected it to rise into the clouds and disappear entirely. It was their belief at first that one of the men had fallen, or been thrown, overboard. And if this was the fact the victim must have been killed, for they were well aware that the "hump" of the island was little but broken rock.

In a moment the seaplane dipped again, however, and the young people in the six canoes saw that both members of her crew were still in the cockpit of the plane. Merely, something had fallen from it as the seaplane passed over the island.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob Henderson, greatly excited. "They dropped something. Let's get over there and find out what it is. It may be an important discovery, Betty."

"Good idea, boy," cried Tommy Tucker, who

heard him. "But what in the world is that fellow doing?"

The man who must have been the assistant to the pilot of the seaplane was now scrambling out upon one of the wings a very dangerous thing to do, as the spectators knew. Nor was he doing it merely to show off.

The pilot shook a clenched fist at his mate. The plane was plunging toward the water again. It was a fact easily discerned that the pilot was fumbling his controls. Libbie shrieked and covered her eyes with her hands.

"He's going to fall! I know he will!" she cried, referring to the man on the wing. "He'll surely fall!"

Again the plane dipped toward the surface of the cove. It seemed as though the next instant the great machine must be submerged.

And then suddenly, and amid a chorus of cries from the boys and girls, the man on the wing was seen to stumble and fall—or did he deliberately jump from the plane? At any rate, he lost hold of the stays and of a sudden dived headlong into the water!

Instantly the pilot recovered his management of the controls, and the nose of the SX-43 shot upward again. It spiraled above the place where the other man had disappeared, and then shot away toward the aviation station, which was some

miles up the shore. Either purposely or because he could not help it, the pilot had deserted his comrade.

"He'll be drowned! He'll be drowned!" cried Louise.

"Hurry, Bob!" commanded Betty. "We must save him!"

Although there was some disturbance in the water where the man had fallen, he did not reappear at the surface.

"Do you suppose that Jasper fellow hit him?" demanded Betty, as she and Bob paddled desperately toward the spot.

"I didn't see him if he did. But after falling so far he may never come up," admitted the boy, soberly.

"The poor fellow!" murmured Betty Gordon.

Although heretofore Nick Olmer had seemed to her mind quite as wicked as his mate, at once he became an object of pity. Betty paddled as hard as Bob himself. But no head broke the troubled surface of the cove. Their sharp eyes searched the water with growing anxiety.

"Looks as though he wasn't coming up," declared Bob.

Suddenly something appeared in the water some yards nearer the rocky island.

"Look! Is that the man?" yelled W. M.

Brown, coming up in the canoe with Alice Guerin. See it?"

"It's a seal!" shouted Gilbert Lane, from still farther away.

"It's something, Bob, something alive! See it dive again? Like that porpoise that frightened me so at the bathing beach."

"It's that airman," said Bob, with confidence, and plunged his paddle into the water again to make after the swimmer.

"Why doesn't he wait? We could help him," went on Betty.

"He's scared. Or he doesn't see us. Or something!" chopped off Bob. "Say! he can swim, all right. Look at him scoot under water, will you!"

Olmer, if it were he, was a remarkable swimmer. He kept well ahead of the leading canoe—indeed he gained upon it.

"Just the same, we'll catch him on shore and make him explain," muttered Bob.

But suddenly the swimmer disappeared altogether. If he dived to escape observation he did not come up. The six canoes were paddled all about the place of his final disappearance, just off the rocky beach of the island. The boys and girls did not find another trace of him.

"It is awful! awful!" wailed Libbie. "It's simply terrible!"

It did seem that if he was alive he must have come up before this to breathe. Twelve pair of sharp young eyes could not have missed him had he crept out on the shore. And he certainly had not swum out into the middle of the cove again.

"He is drowned," stated Betty, her voice shaking.

"I—I guess the body would come up if he was," hesitated Bob.

"Maybe he got entangled in something," Louise suggested, her voice likewise quavering. "It is dreadful."

"And that plane has disappeared," Norma observed. "We must report this."

"Whom shall we report to?" demanded one of the twins.

"Thank goodness, Uncle Dick will be home in time for dinner," said Betty. "We can't do anything now——"

"Yes, we can!" cried Libbie, her mind at work again. "We can go ashore and find the thing they threw out of the plane."

"That child has an idea once in a while," Bobby said briskly. "Let's go."

"It's not a bad plan," agreed Bob, glad to do something.

They were much disturbed by the catastrophe; but the idea of making some further discovery was interesting. They headed the canoes for the

shore. The girls stepped out first, and then the boys carefully drew the canoes up so that nothing could happen to them. Before ascending to the summit of the ridge they explored all along the cove side of the island.

"If that fellow wasn't drowned he certainly did not come ashore on this side," Betty remarked, positively.

"He'd have to be a pretty good swimmer if he went around the island, and without us seeing him," grumbled Bob.

"He couldn't have done that," Betty replied. "Something awful has happened to him, I know."

"I guess that is so," agreed Bob. "I never saw a sign of him after he went down that last time."

They clambered up the rocks in a depressed mood. Even the twins had nothing hopeful to offer. They had marked well the place where the object from the plane had fallen. It was just north of the beacon framework which Bobby insisted upon calling the pirate gibbet.

Betty was not at the head of the procession as the boys and girls mounted the steep way. Tommy and Teddy, considerably out of breath, arrived first at the framework.

"Hi, folks!" shouted Tommy, "don't see a thing. It looked big enough when it fell out of the plane. But the rocks are as bare as your hand."

His brother suddenly gave a yell and darted forward, falling on his knees.

"Look!" he cried. "Somebody's been here. Look at this! Sure as you're a foot high, Bob Henderson, somebody has just been up here ahead of us. And I never saw a thing moving, did you?"

The others joined him quickly. The traces that had so excited Teddy Tucker puzzled his mates as much as his discovery puzzled Ted. For a minute nobody had any explanation to offer.

CHAPTER XIX

A COMPLETE DISAPPEARANCE

"WHAT is the matter with the boy?" Bobby demanded. "What's he down there on his hands and knees for? Think that thing that dropped from the seaplane has sunk into the ground? What a chance!"

But Betty stooped over Teddy Tucker to stare down at what had so surprised the blond twin.

"See those wet marks, Betty?" he cried eagerly. "Footprints. Somebody was here only a minute or two ago, and his feet were wet."

"You are right, Ted," said Betty, with equal confidence. "But who was it and where has he gone?"

"First question is easy," interposed Bob, looking over her shoulder. "That Nick Olmer who fell off the SX-43."

"Oh, Bob, do you think——"

"Hear the fellow!" exclaimed Gilbert Lane. "Jumping at conclusions all right, same as usual."

"Huh!" rejoined Bob, somewhat ruffled. "You

needn't be cocky about it, Gil. My guess is better than yours, I bet. Who do you think made those wet marks?"

"Well——"

"Ah!" said the scornful Bob. "Easy enough to say I don't know what I am talking about. But can you make a better guess?"

"Hush, boys," said Betty, sighing. "Don't quarrel. Of course, whoever made these footprints was here only a minute or two ago. The sun is burning them up already. And where did he come from? How did he get here if it was that man from the plane?"

"Believe me!" ejaculated Bobby, "this is some mystery. The fellow disappears in the cove, and then reappears up here and grabs whatever fell from the plane. For, of course, that is what he came here for."

"And he certainly got it," murmured Norma Guerin, looking all about, as the others were doing. "There's not a sign of anything here now."

"It looked like a black bag, didn't it?" Timothy Derby said. "It might hold all the money they stole at the bank."

"Hooray!" ejaculated Tommy Tucker. "Takes an imagination like Timothy's to suggest that."

"Well, why not?" demanded Libbie, quickly backing up her friend. "If those two awful men stole the money from the bank, and it fell out of

that plane, this one has swum ashore to get it again."

"And he's got it—I'll say he has," grumbled Bob. "But tell me, you folks, where has he gone with it? And what does it all mean?"

"They quarreled," Betty declared with finality.

"It did look as though they were struggling in the cockpit of the seaplane," Louise agreed thoughtfully.

"The bag—or whatever it was—was pitched out. It didn't fall," said Timothy, who seemed entirely sure of this statement.

"That is just as good an idea as any other," said Bob, but looking puzzled. "It gets me!"

"What gets me," put in Bobby, "is how that man got ashore and crept up here to get the bag without our seeing him."

These questions were not to be easily answered. That was plain. But they all agreed that it was Olmer who had jumped from the seaplane and had somehow got ashore and secured the bag. Beyond this was nothing but supposition.

It could not be expected, however, that Betty Gordon and her friends should be long enthralled by this puzzling affair. As they were now pretty well assured that Nick Olmer had got ashore safely, and had even recovered whatever had been dropped or flung from the seaplane, there was little cause for worriment.

"Say! how about eats pretty soon?" Gil Lane demanded. "Seems to me in spite of all this excitement I am growing more ravenous by the minute. How about it, Bob?"

"Did you girls bring any lunch?" W. M. Brown demanded, looking at Alice.

"We brought enough for ourselves, of course," rejoined Alice smartly. "But you can't expect us to feed six great boys as well? The canoes would not have held the provender."

"Hear! Hear!" shouted Bobby. "Well said, Alice."

"You said you would catch fish," Betty reminded them. "Be about it, like good boys. Norma said she had helped to make a fish-fry up in the woods once, and she will boss the affair. Do get busy, boys."

"I'm game," agreed Bob, and proceeded at once to run down for his fishing tackle.

The other boys joined him—all but Timothy Derby. And he was not missed until, at least an hour later, the girls called for Libbie to aid in handling one of the pans in which the freshly caught fish were sizzling.

"Where's that girl?" Bobby demanded. "She's a regular lazybones!"

"Hey! Have you seen Tim anywhere? Has he caught any fish?" shouted Teddy Tucker from the rocks below.

"I do believe they have mooned off together," said Bobby, with exasperation.

"Who has? The Siamese Twins—Libbie and Tim?" demanded Tommy, the dark twin, coming up to the fire near the "gibbet" with another fine bass.

"Sh!" whispered Norma, with the air of a conspirator, and pointing, "I saw Libbie going that way, and she had a book."

"Those futurist poems, or whatever they are," grumbled Bobby. "Blank verse, and so very blank that I can't get a word of sense out of them. I read a whole page this morning."

But Tommy became very active at once. He ran back to the shore where he had been fishing, and soon returned with a very lively hermit crab squirming on his hook. He winked at the girls.

"Leave those poetasters to me," he begged. "I know where they are holed up. Behind that big bowlder. There is a seat there like an arm-chair, from which you can look out to sea. Libbie says it is 'so romantic.'" And wicked Tommy made a most excruciating face as he quoted the dreamer.

Without being retarded by the other girls, the plotter crept along the ridge of the island and finally reached the round-backed bowlder in question. He could not see what was on the other side of it; but, being positive of his quarry, he

raised the point of his fishing pole and let the squirming crab drop out of sight.

The next moment a wild shriek sounded from behind the rock. But the voice was not that of Libbie Littell, nor was it Timothy's more masculine tones. It was plain that the crab had routed out other visitors to Rocky Island, and Betty and her girl friends came running to the spot in much amazement.

CHAPTER XX

THE DANCERS

"Now what have you done, Tommy Tucker?" demanded Bobby, as usual blaming the dark complexioned twin, whether he was intentionally guilty of bringing on disaster or not. "There's somebody there, and I am positive it isn't Libbie and Timothy."

But Tommy only grinned. "I've stirred something up, all right," he muttered, and tried to jerk back the crab.

Somebody had seized the line on the other side of the rock, however, and as Tommy went around in one direction a young man in yachting costume and with a red and angry face, appeared from the other side. This stranger held the fishline with the struggling crab still attached to the hook.

"Who did this?" he demanded angrily. "It might have got into her hair."

"Into whose hair, please?" asked Betty. "I am very sorry if——"

"Florianne's. That crab might have bitten her. Where's the boy with the pole?"

Here Tommy Tucker appeared again, grinning. And with him came a slender woman who, at first sight, the girls thought must be quite young. Then they realized that she was only made up to look young.

"No harm done, Johnny," said the woman kindly. "Boy thought he was playing a joke on some of his own folks. It's all right."

She was a kindly-spoken person, with bright eyes. Her hair was really silvery. But her face was rouged and powdered as though she was just ready to step out before the footlights.

"Oh!" cried Betty suddenly, "did you two see that seaplane go over the island?"

"We heard it," agreed the young man called Johnny, giving Tommy the crab with some vexation. "But we did not look at it. Why do you ask?"

"The men dropped a bag on the island here," Betty explained. "You did not see it?"

"Not at all," said the woman briskly. "We were down there in a fine little cavern where there is a sanded floor, practising new steps. I am Florianne."

She spoke as though the whole world should know who she was. Betty dimpled and smiled politely.

"Oh!" she murmured. "How interesting. You

did not find anything—a black bag, we think it was—here on the rocks?"

"We only found that nasty crab," said the young man in yachting costume, glaring at Tommy Tucker.

"Now, Johnny!" admonished Florianne. She seemed a pleasant woman, if a little too gay in her dress and make up. Betty and her friends really had never seen so much paint and powder worn off the stage.

There was reason for this, however, as soon became apparent. Florianne was not slow to tell Betty and the other listening girls all about her affairs.

"I am resting between seasons over there at Ocean Park. And now the management have offered me an opportunity to arrange a series of folk dances for the local charities. Of course, it is a splendid advertisement for me. The entertainment will be held on the boardwalk, and in the evening. Johnny—he's my partner and, let me whisper," she added, coming closer to Betty, "he's my own sister's son, so he's my nephew. But don't tell anybody. I am supposed to be altogether too young to own a nephew of his age," and she laughed.

"I understand," said Betty, who, like the other girls, was vastly interested in the dancer's observations.

"Why I am telling you this, my dears," said Florianne, searching the group of girls with very bright eyes, "is because I foresee that you can help me. I need all the girls I can get to make the ensemble a colorful bit. And I guarantee you can all dance."

"Oh, yes, indeed, Miss Florianne!" cried Betty. "We are taught some folk dancing, and what Miss Anderson calls 'nature dancing' at our school. Miss Anderson, our physical culture instructor, is here with us at Ocean Park."

"That is fine," declared the dancer. "I am coming to see you all, and your teacher——"

"Oh, Betty! The fish!" shrieked Bobby suddenly, and raced back to the fire.

"Here! You'd better take that crab with you and cook it," said Johnny, Florianne's partner.

"Don't be a grouch, Johnny," said that lady, with a charming smile, and she strolled after the girls and Tommy Tucker to the scene of the fish-fry.

In a little while the other boys came up over the rocks, and then the missing Libbie and Timothy, with their book of poems, appeared from a quite unexpected direction, and they were all introduced to the two dancers.

The latter joined the young people at lunch, and the crisply fried fish and French fried potatoes were pronounced better than could be bought

at the Campeachie. At least, the food was seasoned with much fun and repartee.

Florianne and her nephew had come over to the island in a motor-boat, and that had been hidden on the seaward side of Rocky Island. After luncheon they got into it and chugged away, the dancer promising to call at Marigold Bungalow the next day to arrange with Miss Anderson about her pupils helping in the charity entertainment that would soon take place on the boardwalk.

The appearance of the dancers, and the luncheon that had followed, had completely shifted the general thought and conversation of the Bungalow Canoe Club from the bank robbers to other but no less interesting matters. Now as they paddled back to the dock they began to discuss that topic once more.

It did seem as though the pilot of the SX-43 was a very terrible fellow. He had deserted his mate under very strange conditions.

"I wonder what sort of story he will tell when they ask him about Olmer?" Betty observed. "He must make some explanation of the man's absence, of course."

"We'll find out about that," said her boy chum. "Jasper Heddick must be arrested now, whether we can connect him with the robbery of the bank or not. Here are twelve of us who saw what happened to Nick Olmer. And Heddick was at least

partly to blame. Anyway, he deserted his comrade."

"I guess even Constable Pomfret will agree that something must be done," sighed Betty.

Mr. Gordon was at home when the party arrived, and all the young people tried to tell the tale of wonder and adventure at once.

"Help!" begged that gentleman laughingly. "If I had twelve pairs of ears with which to distinguish twelve different tales at once I could get on better."

Finally it was voted that Betty should relate the happenings of the day. She did so earnestly, as well as clearly. The smile disappeared from Uncle Dick's face. This was no matter of sport. Something that bordered on crime had been committed, aside from the robbing of the local bank.

"Whether those two young men we suspect of being automobile thieves are connected with the bank robbery or not," he said gravely, "it is plain that you young people saw a quarrel between them —a quarrel that was well nigh fatal. And what they dropped from the seaplane, which this Nick Olmer doubtless recovered and has hidden on Rocky Island, is something that perhaps Mr. Pomfret would be glad to get hold of."

He took down the receiver of the telephone and called the office of the constable. Mr. Pomfret was not so hard to convince now that there was

something wrong about Heddick and Olmer, the crew of SX-43. He and the other local authorities were much puzzled by the bank robbery, and they were eager to grasp at any straw that might lead to the solving of the mystery.

"I'll be right over to Marigold Bungalow," said the constable, and he kept his word.

"This is a bad business, a bad business," he said, when he came into the house. "Of course, the bank is open again, having received aid from the Bankers' Association. But the stolen money has disappeared and we can't get a clue to the culprits."

"Have you considered those two young men whom I called to your attention as possible auto thieves?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"Nothing in it! I've been to the aviation station," declared Mr. Pomfret hastily. "The SX-43 and her crew were down the coast when the burglary happened. Doing stunt flights at Alliwell-by-the-Sea. Nothing to it."

"Just listen to this," Mr. Gordon urged, and repeated what his wards and the other boys and girls had so recently seen near and on Rocky Island. "It may be that Heddick and Olmer had nothing to do with the bank robbery; but they have evidently quarreled and, that being the case, this may be the time when just men can get their dues," and he smiled.

"I believe you!" ejaculated the constable. "It

looks promising. Without direct testimony I could not see my way to apprehending those fellows as auto thieves. But now—come over to the aviation station with me, Mr. Gordon, will you? And let your niece and ward come with us."

Naturally Betty and Bob were eager to go. In the constable's car they traveled swiftly by the Shore Road, through the broad salt marshes, to the Atlantic Aviation Corporation's camp. All the seaplanes were now down, for evening was approaching.

They saw the SX-43 before one of the great hangars and a man was working about it. But this man was neither Jasper Heddick nor his mechanician. Mr. Pomfret went to the office to make inquiries.

"I don't believe Jasp Heddick is here," muttered Bob to Betty. "After what happened to-day he will get away. You see!"

"Oh, Bob!" she cried, clasping her hands. "He must be arrested."

Captain Winkler came along, and they asked him about the missing aviator. Heddick had been seen to land alone before noon and had soon disappeared. Nobody had observed Nick Olmer.

"There's been a blow-up between them, I guess," said Captain Winkler. "They often quarreled."

"This is serious, Captain Winkler," said Mr.

Gordon. "Are you sure you have not seen Heddick since noon?"

"Sure. And I'll say it's serious, too," Winkler rejoined, with his slow smile. "I have just learned that it is likely he will not show up here again. He owes the Corporation four hundred dollars, I understand, for use of the plane. It is pretty sure that Jasper Heddick has absconded."

CHAPTER XXI

BOARDWALK DIVERSIONS

BETTY and her uncle and Bob Henderson returned from the aviation station in considerable puzzlement of mind. One fact only seemed clear. Jasper Heddick had disappeared. Just what had happened to his mate at Rocky Island even the most imaginative of the young people could not guess.

The interest of Betty and Bob, as well as of their friends, in the bank robbery and the fact that the crew of the seaplane SX-43 were probably connected with that crime, was rather dwarfed during the next few days by the plans for the folk dances on the boardwalk. That is, the girls' interest therein caused them to forget other matters.

Florianne, who was a very sweet-tempered woman and of whom Miss Anderson approved when she came to Marigold Bungalow, inspired Betty and her girl friends with enthusiasm for the "show." The boys felt themselves rather neglected

for a while. Bob and the others found plenty of amusement, however, in boating and fishing and swimming.

The very day after they had seen Nick Olmer fall from the seaplane, Bob came to Mr. Gordon and reported that Constable Pomfret and a party of the local police had landed on Rocky Island and had searched it with seeming thoroughness, but without finding the missing aviator.

"Of course Nick Olmer is gone," Bob stated with confidence. "And whatever it was he dropped from the plane that time is gone with him."

"You mean the money stolen from the bank," said Timothy Derby seriously.

"You seem so sure of that, you must have inside knowledge," declared Bobby, with some scorn.

"Why! what else could it be?" demanded Libbie, bound to back up Timothy.

The question did seem unanswerable. Betty wanted to know, however, how Olmer could have got away from the island without a boat and burdened by the bag of money, some of which they knew was in coin.

"That is your own question, Betty," laughed Bob. "You answer it. At any rate, he has got away and nobody knows where Jasp Heddick is, either. It's a puzzle."

It remained a puzzle. But the members of the Bungalow Canoe Club had "other fish to fry" and

gave small attention just now to the aftermath of the bank robbery. Even when Mr. Cutler arrived at Ocean Park the next Sunday there was nothing he could do toward identifying the two rascals.

"You can't be sure of anybody's identification if you don't see 'em, or at last see their pictures," declared Sally.

The crowd at Marigold Bungalow found plenty of amusement and excitement in addition to the girls' rehearsals for the folk dances. There was not a show in Ocean Park that the twelve did not enter, not a "shoot the chutes" or a "ride" they did not enjoy. Naturally there were some entertainments they favored more than they did others, and they went several times to the canine circus.

Sally and the tattooed boy sometimes joined the bungalow crowd at the bathing beach in the morning. But Ben Michaels kept away from the water after his first unfortunate experience. He confessed to Betty, who was interested in the slow-witted fellow, that he "just hated being a freak" and that he would rather remain in Maine all the year round and work on his grandfather's farm.

"But mom makes me go to school in the winter. We have a good school. And she says she won't shave her beard until she has enough money saved up to put me through college," and he sighed.

Betty was somewhat impressed by this, and she wondered if Uncle Dick had not been slightly

mistaken in intimating that the exhibition of one's personal peculiarities as a freak in a side show was always from the urge of vanity. She asked him about this.

"Perhaps my statement was rather too broad," confessed Mr. Gordon, but smiling. "However, Sally says that Mrs. Michaels is so handy with her needle that she might earn a good living with it. The development of that talent might do quite as much for young Ben, and she could keep him out of the circus environment."

Betty Gordon's main interest was given to the charity entertainment scheduled for one evening on the boardwalk in front of the Colosseum. Florianne, as a professional dancer, found the material among the girls and young women at the seaside resort quite sufficient for all purposes of the "show." The six girls from Marigold Bungalow—even Libbie who abhorred exertion of any kind, so Bobby wickedly suggested, save at meal time—entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the affair.

They were in the first half of the entertainment, and their particular dance went off splendidly. At one place in the dance Betty had a part that took her to the front of the stage, while the other dancers were grouped a little distance back of her.

It was a very small part, and she had not more than a dozen steps before the others would move

forward to either side of her. But in this moment of time, as Betty stood apart from the other dancers and with the jumble of faces of the audience before her, she felt suddenly like a small child miles away from every other human being.

When just on the point of flinging her arms outward and upward and taking the first steps, as Florianne had taught her, she had the feeling that she was moving like a jointed doll. Then, at the most important moment, Bob's cheerful face and encouraging grin stood out suddenly from that mass of faces, and she flung herself into the dance with abandon. In another moment the other dancers were at her side and she was again one of many, and after another few minutes this particular dance was over.

The applause was loud and long and hearty. Did they not have the six Salsette boys to lead it? And who could make more noise than Bob Henderson and his chums, especially when they were as honestly enthusiastic as they were now, for the dance was very pretty and had been well done?

After this dance the girls changed to their usual dresses, and took their places on the steps of the Colosseum, which faced the end of the steel pier.

The second half of the entertainment was in progress. Florianne led a well trained group of the older performers in a series of steps that excited the great crowd which had gathered to

a noisy appreciation of their efforts. Suddenly Betty Gordon was made aware of somebody tugging at her sweater from behind. She darted a glance over her shoulder to recognize Sally Cutler in the ornate costume she always wore in the ticket booth.

"Goodness, Sally! can you leave the ticket booth at this time?" asked Betty.

"Corwin's in my place, and Ben is waiting for me right back here. I've got something dreadful' exciting to tell you, Betty."

"What is it?"

"Listen, Betty. It's that awful Jasp Heddick. I just seen him to-night. He is disguised like a chauffeur. But I'd know him in them puttees and goggles anywhere."

"Oh, Sally!" gasped Betty. "He is not in town any more! He wouldn't dare be! You have made a mistake!"

"I have not. Ben's watching him now. He's reading a paper in a restaurant up the boardwalk. We followed him over here from the circus. I tell you I'm sure, Betty Gordon!"

"I want to see. I can't believe it," said Betty, and she followed Sally out of the crowd without saying a word to anybody else. It did not enter her mind at the moment that even if the suspect proved to be Jasper Heddick she could do nothing to apprehend him.

The two girls wormed their way through the press of spectators, descended the Colosseum steps at the northern end, and so reached the edge of the crowd that surrounded the roped arena inside which the dances were taking place.

"Here's Ben Michaels!" exclaimed Sally. "What did I tell you, Betty? He's there yet, ain't he, Ben?"

"Drinking a cup of coffee and reading his paper," replied the tattooed boy, who must have run away from his mother and the show, for he had only a long coat over his spangled costume.

"Show me!" exclaimed Betty eagerly.

Ben started up the boardwalk at once and the two girls followed him closely. There were not many people in this direction, for the entire interest of the crowd was centered in the dances.

"There's the place," whispered Sally.

"Oh! The Silvershell Lunch?" queried Betty.

"That's it," Ben replied. "Come this way and I'll show you."

They went into the ally beside the concession and Ben pointed through a small side window into the lunchroom. Betty Gordon saw a man in a maroon uniform, evidently that of a chauffeur, wearing his cap and with his goggles pushed up, drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. Had they looked in from the boardwalk she would have been unable to see his face at all.

"Ain't that Heddick?" hissed Sally. "I'd better call a cop, hadn't I?"

"Oh, wait!" cried Betty. "I'm not sure——"

"I am," proclaimed the other girl decidedly.

"I—I—if it is Jasper Heddick, how dare he come back here to Ocean Park?" asked Betty Gordon.

"Say!" exclaimed Ben, who seemed now to be not so slow-witted as he sometimes appeared, "that's easy. If them fellers dropped the bank money out of the plane on to the island, like you folks say they did, then this Jasper has come back for it."

"Oh!" gasped Betty. "But the other one got it."

"This Jasper Heddick don't know that," declared Sally, with conviction. "Ben's got the rights of it, I believe."

"Maybe that is so," admitted Betty. "But if we cause his arrest right now we shall never be able to prove that he has returned for the money."

"That's a fact," grumbled Sally.

"Let's watch him and see if he goes to the island," said Ben.

"We'll both get scolded if we don't go back to the show," Sally objected.

"There won't be much of a crowd at the show to-night," the tattooed boy remarked recklessly.

"Who cares? I'd like to see what this Jasper Heddick is up to."

"Oh, so should I," cried Betty.

Betty had begun to make plans now. She was excited. She had no idea why the ex-aviator was waiting in this restaurant. But she believed that, as Ben said, he should be watched rather than arrested.

"I tell you what," she said eagerly. "I'll tell Uncle Dick if I can find him. And Bob Henderson. Maybe we can capture this man in the very act of hunting for whatever fell from the seaplane on Rocky Island. If he doesn't know that Nick Olmer was not drowned, perhaps he hopes to find on the island that thing they dropped. Will you watch him, Ben?"

"He won't get away from me easy," said the tattooed boy confidently. "He doesn't know me, and won't suspect me; but you girls had better keep out of his sight."

This seemed good advice, and Betty and the circus girl stole away, leaving Ben Michaels to watch the suspected bank robber. Both girls were trembling with excitement. Even the bold Sally felt that the occasion was hazardous.

CHAPTER XXII

TRAILING JASPER HEDDICK

THE entire bungalow crowd would have been hard to gather at that time, but the two excited girls managed to get Mr. Gordon and Bob Henderson into a little eddy in the throng watching the dancing, where they could gain a moment's private conversation. A few words were sufficient to rouse the interest of both Betty's guardian and her boy chum.

"Here is something doing, sure enough!" exclaimed Bob, looking at Betty in wonder. "You do manage to stir up the most exciting things."

"It is Sally who has stirred this up," declared Betty modestly.

"And that fellow may be getting away from us right now," interrupted the girl from the dog circus. "Ben will follow him; but who will follow Ben?"

"I guess you are right, my girl," agreed Mr. Gordon briskly. "Something must be done immediately about apprehending this Heddick. What

you young people saw of the fight between the two aviators convinces me that they are desperate men. We can do absolutely nothing without the police."

"He'll get away!" wailed Sally.

"No. You and Betty run and watch. If he starts off, let your friend, the tattooed boy, follow him and you girls keep him in sight. Wait here with me, Bob. I must first of all telephone to Pomfret."

Mr. Gordon saw Miss Anderson and advised her to take the rest of the young people home after the entertainment, while he and Betty and Bob were engaged. He said nothing about the new discovery, for he did not want the whole crowd "tagging after them," as Bob expressed it.

Then Mr. Gordon sought a telephone and obtained speech with the chief constable of Ocean Park. When Betty ran back to report that the suspect was already leaving the Silvershell Lunchroom, her guardian had gained Constable Pomfret's promise to come right over.

"He will be here in ten minutes or so," said Mr. Gordon.

"He'll be too late!" cried the excited Betty. "If that horrid fellow gets away from us this time I shall be in despair! Don't you think, Uncle Dick, that we ought to go right up and grab him, police or no police?"

"We can scarcely do that legally. For, you see, there is no warrant out for him and I do not care to risk a suit for false arrest. Nor do I want you young folks to appear personally in this affair, if it can be helped. The police must get their own evidence without dragging you, Betty, or even Sally, into the case."

They left Bob sitting on the steps of the Colosseum, and Uncle Dick and Betty joined Sally on the boardwalk. She said that Ben was trailing the man who they were sure had been pilot of the seaplane SX-43. The conspirators followed Ben Michaels. The crowd was thinning rapidly at this end of the boardwalk and Heddick kept straight on toward the beaches.

When the constable arrived at the spot where Bob waited he had a bank detective with him. The constable was excited.

"Where is Mr. Gordon?" he demanded. "After the suspect? Show me, then!"

"Yes, sir," said Bob briskly, starting off.

"Are you sure it is that Heddick?"

"The girls are," answered Bob. "And they've got sharp eyes."

"Very strange," muttered the constable. "Come along, Briggs. There really may be something in this."

They did not overtake Betty and Uncle Dick and the others until they arraved at the extreme

end of the boardwalk. From that point the lights at the boathouse on the shore of the cove were visible.

"Hurry up!" whispered Betty, quite enthralled by the situation. "Uncle Dick says Heddick has hired a motor-boat of Horace Jones and gone out to the island. We'll get another and follow the fellow."

"Cricky, Betsey! this is great," declared her boy friend. "If there is an arrest we'll be right in it."

"I hope nothing will happen to let that man get away," said the girl. "He is the most slippery fellow!"

"You said something," agreed Bob.

Mr. Gordon and Constable Pomfret and the detective went ahead across the sands. Arriving at the boathouse, they found Horace Jones, the old man who took care of the young people's canoes, already getting a big launch ready.

"Did you know that fellow who hired your other boat, Horace?" Mr. Gordon asked.

"Seen him," said Jones with characteristic bruskness. "He's one o' them crazy flying men. Or, he was. He's raisin' a mustache, he is, and looks some different. But I shouldn't be surprised if his name is Heddick."

"Looks as if we'd got him," said Constable Pomfret, now growing enthusiastic. "If his mate

is over there on Rocky Island, we'll gather both of 'em in."

"And don't forget the bag of money," said Bob eagerly. "They dropped that from the sea-plane. Maybe their struggle before the bag fell was just put on. I guess they planned this all out beforehand."

But Mr. Gordon and the two officers were only amused by the boy's belief. However, all of them were confident that Jasper Heddick was about to be apprehended, whether his comrade, Olmer, was or not.

Jones ran them out to the island in a very short time. They had lost sight of the lights of the motor-boat that Heddick had sailed in from the dock. But Jones ran the launch along the rocky shores until the other craft was spied, drawn close to the rocks in a small basin.

"Lights out. She's there, just the same," said the old boatman. "Want her?"

"If she is drawn out here those fellows—if either or both are on the island—cannot very well escape," said Pomfret. "Yes. We'll capture the enemy's boat."

They did this, and towed the second boat around to the seaward side of the island, where the officers and Mr. Gordon, as well as the quartette of young people, landed.

"Don't wander away by yourselves, boys and

girls," commanded Mr. Gordon, as Jones pushed off again and moved the two boats to a point some rods off shore. "Remember this is no play we are engaged in. It may be that the two men we are looking for are armed and are desperate. They must be criminals, in any case."

"Oh!" gasped Betty. "You don't suppose they would shoot us, do you, Uncle Dick?"

"They won't if they've got right good sense," put in Sally Cutler before Mr. Gordon could reply. "If that Jasp, or if Nick Olmer, shoots me or Ben my father will send them to prison for the rest of their lives."

"Huh!" ejaculated Bob in some disdain. "That wouldn't do you much good after you were shot, Sally."

"Mind what I say," Mr. Gordon added. "Keep behind us. And don't talk much. We do not want to advertise our presence to those fellows, if they are here."

The search was thoroughly done by Mr. Gordon and the two officers, but, oddly enough, after searching the island from end to end, no sign of the two ex-aviators was found. The party looked into many shallow caves, too; none of them held any refuge, nor showed any sign of having been occupied.

"They've got to be here!" cried Sally, but under her breath. "They just got to be, Mr. Gordon!"

"That seems probable. But they are so well hidden that we cannot find them," rejoined Betty's guardian. "Especially at night. These lanterns do not reveal as much as sunlight will. What say, Pomfret?"

"I agree with you," said the constable. "We know Heddick is here, and, according to the young people, his mate must be here, too. He's had no means of getting off the island these last few days, for it is too far to the mainland for him to swim, no matter how good a swimmer he is."

"And he is a mighty good swimmer, too," muttered Bob.

"When I was over here with my men the other day," continued Pomfret reflectively, "we were unable to find any hide-out where Nick Olmer might have laid up. But I know a fisherman who has spent much time on this island, and he knows every cranny and crevice in it. We'll get him to comb the rocks."

"Meanwhile?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"Oh, meanwhile we will take away Heddick's boat and keep watch on the island so that the fellows cannot get away. I am interested in them now, Mr. Gordon. Whether they were mixed up in that bank robbery or not, they have done enough, especially Jasper Heddick, to warrant my apprehending them on sight."

"I hope Uncle Phin gets satisfaction for their

stealing of his auto," said Sally, as they went back to the edge of the water. "The bank's made up the money loss to Corwin and pop, so that's all right."

Betty and Bob, however, were much disappointed. They had hoped that the two ex-aviators would be immediately arrested and the mysterious business brought to a close.

CHAPTER XXIII

AT THE SUMMIT OF PIKE'S PEAK

It was the following afternoon, and after their usual sojourn at the bathing beach, that Bob Henderson came down from his room arrayed for the boardwalk, but with a peacock's "eye" stuck in the band of his hat, wearing knickerbockers, and with his field glasses hung across his shoulder by a strap.

"Behold!" exclaimed Bobby, striking an attitude in front of the boy before he reached the bottom step. "Behold! you are all rigged out like a mountain climber, Robert. What do you represent—an Alpine guide? Do you yodel? You look as if you might be a yodeler."

"Goodness! I never thought he was as bad as all that," giggled Tommy Tucker. "Can't you get arrested for being that?"

"For being a yodeler?" repeated Bobby gravely. "Undoubtedly. If you yodel badly enough. And Bob looks bad——"

"Now, folks," interrupted Betty, laughing,

"you let Bob alone. I can see in his eye that he is about to suggest something to stir up the clan. What is it, Bob?"

"Miss Roberta Littell is quite right," Bob said seriously. "I am going mountain climbing. And if any, or all of you, want to come along, I am prepared to pay the shot, as they say in the old-time sea stories. Uncle Dick just gave me my month's stipend—is that right, Libbie? Is it a good word?"

"It is a good word, Bob, if you are willing to spend some of your pin money on us. Every cent I brought with me is gone."

"Money burns a hole in your pocket," said Louise to her cousin with some severity. "Every time you pass a candy shop you see something you want to eat."

"Never mind, Libbie," said Bob. "You are in on this. You shall go mountain climbing at my expense."

But this suggestion did not quite meet with the plump girl's approval after all.

"Why is it that you all can think of nothing but hard work?" she asked. "Mountain climbing is not to my fancy. Oh, no!"

"Libbie!" exclaimed Timothy Derby suddenly, "I know what Bob is up to. I haven't any money, either; but if he wants to pay for our tickets I for one will attend him to the mountain's peak."

"Ah!" cried Betty. "I see. 'Pike's Peak' is the summit you mean to climb. Come on, Bob! That is the very nicest ride there is on the boardwalk. I'm ready."

The Pike's Peak ride was one of the more expensive entertainments along the Ocean Park boardwalk.

"But there is nothing small about Bob when it comes to standing treat," declared Teddy. "Libbie cannot complain of the exertion which this climb demands."

"Your hiking is all done for you, Miss Lazybones," was Bobby's comment for Libbie's particular ear.

"That is quite as it should be," granted the plump girl. "And it really is romantic—the most romantic thing along the whole boardwalk."

"Don't feel so romantic that you fall off when we get to the peak," warned Bobby, but laughing. "You are the greatest girl!"

"Oh, no!" chuckled Tommy Tucker. "Not the greatest, Bobby. Think of Sally's friend, the fat lady."

"Aren't you a horrid boy!" giggled the romantic girl's cousin.

Bob and Betty led the way from the bungalow to the boardwalk. When the Marigold Bungalow crowd turned out *en masse* they were bound to be noticed. By this time Betty and her friends were

well known in Ocean Park to many of the summer visitors, as well as to the "natives" and concessionaires.

During the past few days they had become well acquainted with Florianne, too. And now when Betty saw the dancer on the veranda of the Campeachie, she broke away from Bob with an apology and ran to speak to the woman who had so successfully staged the charity entertainment the night before.

"You girls from Marigold Bungalow did splendidly," the professional dancer said to Betty, smiling. "Even Johnny says that and, for a young man, he is the biggest old grouch I know," and she laughed.

Betty had a question she wished to ask Florianne and she put it at once:

"Madam Florianne, what sort of cave did you find over there on Rocky Island the other day when you and your nephew were there?"

"What sort of cave? Why, just a regular cave," and the woman laughed again. "It had a roof, and sides, and nice white sand on the floor, and—and—yes! there was a passage leading out at the back. I don't know how deep the passage was, for we did not venture into it."

"It is funny we could not find any such cave," murmured Betty thoughtfully, quite puzzled. "At least, we didn't find it——"

She was going to say "last night," but she thought in time and did not say it. Florianne seemed much amused.

"If you looked for it at high tide I guess you would not see the opening," the dancer said. "I think the sea comes in and almost covers the opening at high tide."

"Oh! Maybe that is it, Madam Florianne," cried Betty. "I'm glad you told me that. The next time we go to the island I'll remember that."

She ran away to join her friends on their way to the Pike's Peak ride. What Florianne had said about the cave gave Betty Gordon an idea that she intended to discuss with Uncle Dick. Just now, however, the party from Marigold Bungalow had something on their minds besides the disappearance of the ex-aviators.

The fun of the ride began right at the edge of the boardwalk. There was a troop of burros, and each of the merry dozen bestrode one of the funny little animals for the first part of the entertainment.

In single file, Betty and Bob in the lead, they entered a "canyon," the walls of which were of painted canvas. But it really looked like the real thing. They wound in and about for some minutes, and then came out at what looked like a log hut with a rough sign over the door which read: "Pike's Peak Hotel."

Here the party exchanged the burros' saddles for seats in two cars shaped a good deal like the boats belonging to the other rides and to the chutes. A man sat at a wheel in the front of each car and managed the brakes.

The machinery started, and the two cars shot up an incline, through another painted passage, and so out on the elevated framework which towered so high that they could see all over Ocean Park and away out to sea as well.

Up they went, and then dashed down an incline so rapidly that the rushing air almost stopped their breath. There was a thrill to this ride that always delighted Betty. She clung to Bob's arm and to the rail on her other side, and blinked her eyes rapidly.

Up another hill the car shot and this time came out upon the highest curve of the ride. The boys shouted their delight, and the girls shrilled a school song as the cars tore up the track.

"Great, Betty?" was Bob's comment, looking sideways at her.

"Glorious!" the girl rejoined.

Just then the cars stopped. The halt was so abrupt that, had they not all been clinging tightly, they might have been flung from their seats.

"Goodness me! what's happened?" shrieked Alice Guerin.

"This isn't on the program," declared her sister, "I am sure. Has it broken down?"

The machinery certainly had stopped. The men managing the cars endeavored to start them, but could not. There they were, stuck on the very peak of the elevated structure.

"Well, we're not hurt any," said Louise placidly. "I guess we'll get down all right."

"See!" cried Bobby, excitedly. "There is Rocky Island, just as plain as can be. And look at all the boats out there."

"Let me have your glasses, Bob," Betty begged. "What a view one has from this place!"

She accepted the glasses and put them to her eyes. The next moment she started and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What do you see?" asked Bob curiously. "You're looking at the island, Betty."

"Sh!" exclaimed the girl. "I just saw two figures. There they are again! They are two men, Bob. These are splendid glasses of yours."

"Sure, they are," agreed Bob proudly.

"I can see those men very clearly. I—believe —they—are— Oh, Bob," gasped Betty earnestly, "I am almost sure they are Jasp Heddick and Nick Olmer! They are still on that island, even if the police haven't found them."

CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE CAVERN

THE cars on the aerial railroad were not halted for long. Betty said nothing to anybody then save to Bob Henderson about the two figures on the island which she had seen so clearly from the summit of Pike's Peak. But when the party returned to the bungalow she told Mr. Gordon.

"No more hunting about that place at night," he said, shaking his head. "I will tell Pomfret in the morning. His men have been watching the island to-day, I believe, but they couldn't see all the island, as you could, for they are at the level of the water."

"And Madam Florianne says there is a cave there that can be entered only at low tide," the girl said eagerly. "I do think Rocky Island is the most mysterious place!"

"It seems to be," her guardian agreed.

Betty had to tell Bobby and the other girls at bedtime about what she thought she had seen through the glasses, and there was such a buzz of

conversation in their rooms that the boys knocked on the partitions and wanted to know the reason for all the excitement. Of course, Bob Henderson knew, but he had kept silent about it.

"If there is going to be another chase after those fellows, I want to see it," Bobby declared.

"Let's all go!" exclaimed Norma Guerin. "I am as excited as I can be!"

It was agreed that the canoe club must be afloat early the next morning. In fact, the twelve got away from the bungalow and down to the boat landing at the cove before Constable Pomfret came to hear Mr. Gordon's report. Betty's guardian appeared at the cove with the police, but he was very decided in his warning to the young people not to land upon the island until the officers were first ashore.

"I saw smoke over there early," said Horace Jones, the boatkeeper. "I imagine those fellows are there yet."

The fisherman Mr. Pomfret had spoken of was with the party. He agreed that there were caverns in the island the entrances to which were hidden at high tide. It was now low water, and the big motor-boat, filled with officers, made directly for the island.

"We want to be in at the finish," Bobby said excitedly to Betty and the others. "Oh! I do

hope they catch those two men. I'm just as excited as Norma."

After Mr. Pomfret and the other men had landed the canoeists got ashore in a hurry. They swarmed up over the rocks and followed the police, who searched every crevice along the water's edge on both shores of the island.

But remembering Mr. Gordon's stern instructions, the young people kept some distance in the rear. The weed-covered ledges and bowlders along the brink of the sea interested Betty and her friends more than did the higher part of the island. They peeped and peered in every cranny and cavity. There were several caverns with sanded floors, which might have been that in which the two dancers had practiced their new steps; but Betty could find no rear passage leading out of any of these caves.

Naturally the boys and girls became tired of the search after a time. Even Mr. Pomfret and his men seemed to have given up hope of finding Heddick and Olmer. The police gathered with Mr. Gordon and the fisherman at the landing where the motor-boat and canoes were moored, to talk the matter over.

"Got a bite!" exclaimed Teddy Tucker, who was an indefatigable fisherman and never went out in his canoe without tackle and bait. "Say, this is good! A blackfish—a tautaug. Come on,

Bob! Let's catch a mess to take home to the cook. She'll say we are regular fellows."

The other boys as well as Bob, ran for their tackle and bait cans. Timothy and Libbie, however, slipped away. Betty heard the poetical youth say to the girl:

"I know it all, now, Elizabeth. 'The Cavalier Rides By' is the loveliest piece in the whole book."

"Oh, Timothy!" murmured Libbie, "I think you are just wonderful."

Betty thought Uncle Dick did not mean for the young people to separate, so she kept watch on Timothy and Libbie. When Bobby demanded to know the whereabouts of the poetical pair, Betty pointed out the particular cavern into which they had disappeared.

"Poetry, as usual?" exclaimed Bobby.

"I fancy so. 'The Cavalier Rides By.' I heard Timothy say he knew it perfectly, and he has gone to recite it to poor Libbie."

"*Poor* Libbie! Bah!" exclaimed Bobby. "She encourages him. And there are twenty-eight verses in that thing. It is as long as 'The Cowboy's Lament,' and they say that every puncher that sings that adds a new verse.

"Come on!" added Bobby wickedly. "Let's give them a shock!"

She gathered the other three together in a minute. None of them cared much for fishing.

Alice said that it was "nasty and smelly," anyway. Bobby's plan for startling the poetic couple was more fun.

The five girls crept down over the slippery rocks to a point from which they could look into the cave through a crevice. When the sea was up, the entrance to the cavern was hidden; but this crack in the roof gave a view of the sanded floor clear to the back of the hollow.

Striding back and forth upon the smooth sand was Timothy, his hat off, his hair shaken back from his flushed face, and he was mouthing the lines of the poem in grand style. Alice began to giggle, but Bobby hushed her with a look.

"All ready, now! We'll shout together down the crack and scare 'em out of their poetic frenzy. Ready?"

Suddenly Betty clutched her arm. She was staring wildly into the cavern below them, but not at their friends. A round bowlder at the extreme rear of the cave, but which Betty could plainly see, had moved! It turned as though it were on a pivot. An aperture became visible beside it, and in that opening Betty Gordon saw the head of a man who was staring into the cavern.

"What's the matter, Betty?" whispered her chum.

"Oh! Bobby! Jasp——"

"What is the matter with you?" again de-

manded her friend, and with increasing excitement.

Betty sprang to her feet at last with a shout of alarm. The two below were frightened enough, but Betty's immediate companions were even more amazed by her actions. She whirled about and started over the rocks at a desperate run toward Mr. Gordon and the policemen. After that first scream, however, she reserved her breath so as to tell Uncle Dick what she had seen in the cavern.

CHAPTER XXV

AN END TO ALL THINGS

BETTY'S wild shout succeeded in frightening Libbie and Timothy quite as successfully as Bobby Littell could have wished. They came scuttling out of the cave with much despatch. But they had no idea, any more than had the other girls, what had "started Betty off!"

"Suppose she's gone crazy?" asked Norma. "She looked wild."

"I left my book down there, she startled me so," gasped Timothy.

"Don't go down again! Don't go down there, Timothy!" commanded Libbie. "Betty was looking into the cave when she screamed, so Bobby says. She saw something!"

"And it wouldn't have been you spouting poetry, Tim," added Bobby, the irrepressible. "She's used to that, so it couldn't have scared her."

Now they saw Mr. Gordon and Constable Pomfret and the other men coming hurriedly over

the rocks. Betty was leading the way, gesticulating excitedly. Bob and the other boys dropped their fishlines hurriedly and started after the crowd.

"Oh, my dears!" murmured Norma, "it is those awful aviators! Betty——"

Betty approached as fast as she could, her finger on her lips in warning.

"Hush!" she whispered, when she was near enough to her girl friends and Timothy Derby for them to hear. "Those awful men are hiding in that cave!"

Libbie and Timothy could scarcely believe this to be true, for they had seen no sign of the men's presence. But it was so. Dividing his party into groups to beat the surrounding rocks, Mr. Pomfret went down into the cavern himself, with Mr. Gordon and the fisherman, and they finally routed Jasper Heddick and Nick Olmer out of a passage that the two fellows had blocked with a movable stone.

They were hauled out into the open, and with them came the black bag the young people had seen dropped from the seaplane. That bag, as all had suspected, contained the loot of the Ocean Park bank.

Whether Heddick and Olmer had quarreled or not, they had evidently made up again and had planned to get away from Rocky Island with the

stolen money at the first opportunity. But, instead, they were taken to jail with every prospect of a long term in prison ahead of them. They never knew how much their capture and punishment was due to Betty Gordon and her friends and to Sally Cutler. But it was a fact that the young people's continued interest in the two men had kept the case alive when the police had about given the mystery up as inexplicable.

Meanwhile the Marigold Bungalow crowd continued to have the liveliest times of any vacation group in all of Ocean Park. The canoe club held races in the cove, to which all other canoeists in the vicinity were invited. On the bathing beach they got up handball, tug-o'-war, and basketball contests, as well as the usual swimming races. The concessions along the boardwalk were, of course, a continual source of amusement to all of the young folks.

"Wish we could take all these things back to Shadyside with us," Bobby Littell said on one occasion. "Think of a carrousel like this one right in front of the gym building."

Bobby was as fond as a small boy of riding the wooden horses. One might think that she had never been in a saddle on a real horse in all her life!

"I lo-o-ove those dreamy tunnel rides," said Libbie. "And that Pike's Peak ride where we got

stuck. It seems as if you were going on a long journey, and were never going to get there."

"What an idea!" was the practical Louise's comment.

"Yes," breathed Libbie ecstatically. "And then you shoot out into daylight and your heart jumps right up into your mouth——"

"And that's sure enough a mouthful!" exclaimed Bobby, laughing.

"I've bought all the souvenirs along the boardwalk that my trunk will hold," observed Norma. "No room for my clothes. Guess I'll have to carry every one of my dresses over my arm when we go away."

In all their good times Betty did not forget Sally Cutler. She not only was amused by the peculiarities of the girl at the dog circus, but she appreciated Sally's good qualities. On one occasion Betty said to the ticket-selling girl:

"You know, Sally, this selling tickets at a dog show and associating with people like those freaks, isn't just the best thing for you. My uncle says it isn't. You haven't any mother, and your father doesn't consider everything. But if your mother was alive I am sure she would not approve."

"I reckon you're right, Betty Gordon," said Sally. "Pop was saying so himself when he was down on Sunday."

"I am glad he sees it too."

"And the show has done so well he thinks I'd better come home. The Corwins are pretty honest. They can get a man to sell tickets. But Ben Michaels is an awfully nice boy; don't you think so, Betty?"

Betty told her she did think so—for about the one hundredth time!—and she was really glad that the tattooed boy was going to leave the freak show too. He said his mother would not have to be a bearded lady any more, either; and it would be possible for Ben to spend the next few years in school.

"I suppose, Miss Fixit," Bobby Littell said to Betty one evening, as they were preparing for bed, "that there is not a solitary living thing here at Ocean Park that needs your attention now? Everything is running smoothly?"

Betty pinched her. "Do you think I am always interfering with other peoples' affairs?" she demanded of her chum.

"Not in the least. You are forever and ever smoothing other people's paths and making twisted things come straight—Ouch!"

"Maybe I could comb the twists out of your hair, Bobby," suggested Betty demurely.

"Oh! I don't see how it gets snarled up so," sighed Bobby. "Yours doesn't, Betty."

Betty smiled at herself in the glass. "I won-

der," she said, "if other people besides you, Bobby, think that I interfere too much."

"Huh? Nonsense! Who said I thought so?" demanded Bobby.

"Well, you hinted——"

"Oh! There! I got out a regular bird's nest that time. Why, Betty Gordon!" added her friend, "I never meant to criticize you—not really. You do have a way of helping people out of difficulties, and making plain all the crooked things. Dear me! I don't wonder that Mr. Gordon admires you so and that even Miss Anderson says you are quite wonderful."

" 'Wonderful' ? Did she say that?"

"Exactly. Wonderful was the word she used." Then Bobby began to giggle. "She said you are the most wonderful girl for getting into scrapes and out again that she ever knew—you even beat me in that line."

Betty laughed at this. "I am not sure that I feel complimented after all," she said. "You have always held the palm. And you should, too, you are the oldest."

"Don't remind me of my age," sighed Bobby. "We are getting to be regular Mrs. Methuselahs, Betty. Our second year at Shadyside will begin next fall. And mother wrote me in June that Aunt Hannah had written saying that when I

come out I should have her necklace and bracelets. My! I feel grown up already."

"When you come out!" repeated Betty scornfully. "My dear girl, there is a lot of water to run by the mill before you are even a 'sub-deb.' Come out, indeed!"

"Why, it is easy enough to imagine that," declared Bobby, her eyes shining. "And I can imagine even farther. I can see myself grown-up—quite. And being engaged. And even getting married—Oh! the gown I'll have, and the orange blossoms, and the great bouquet, and the pointed satin slippers——"

"And the corns the slippers will give you. Humph!" exclaimed Betty. "You talk as absurdly as Libbie. To think of being married at your age!"

"Oh, no. Not at my present age," giggled Bobby, hopping into bed. "And I haven't yet picked out the person I am going to marry. Have you, Betty?"

"What nonsense!" ejaculated Betty Gordon. "Go to sleep, will you?" and she nestled her own head into the pillow.

"I'll see if I can dream about him," yawned Bobby. "The coming prince—Ow! Good night, Betty. See if you can dream about your prince, too."

"Ridiculous!" ejaculated Betty.

But when she shut her eyes all she could see—and it was the last waking vision she had—was the merry face of Bob Henderson. She blinked twice, trying to clear her sleepy eyes of this reflection. But when she closed the lids again back came Bob's face.

"Just as clear, as clear," sighed Betty Gordon. "Is Bob——"

At this point her reflections ceased, for Betty was fast asleep.

THE END

THE BETTY GORDON SERIES

BY ALICE B. EMERSON

Author of the Famous "Ruth Fielding" Series

12*mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors*

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid

A series of stories by Alice B. Emerson which are bound to make this writer more popular than ever with her host of girl readers.

1. BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM
or The Mystery of a Nobody

At the age of twelve Betty is left an orphan. Her uncle sends her to live on a farm.

2. BETTY GORDON IN WASHINGTON
or Strange Adventures in a Great City

In this volume Betty goes to the National Capitol to find her uncle and has several unusual adventures.

3. BETTY GORDON IN THE LAND OF OIL
or The Farm That Was Worth a Fortune

From Washington the scene is shifted to the great oil fields of our country. A splendid picture of the oil field operations of today.

4. BETTY GORDON AT BOARDING SCHOOL
or The Treasure of Indian Chasm

Seeking the treasure of Indian Chasm makes an exceedingly interesting incident.

5. BETTY GORDON AT MOUNTAIN CAMP
or The Mystery of Ida Bellethorne

At Mountain Camp Betty found herself in the midst of a mystery involving a girl whom she had previously met in Washington.

6. BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK
or Gay Days on the Boardwalk

Adventure in high society let loose on the seashore.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers **New York**

THE RUTH FIELDING SERIES

BY ALICE B. EMERSON

12mo. Illustrated. *Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid*

Ruth Fielding will live in juvenile Fiction.

RUTH FIELDING OF THE RED MILL
or Jasper Parloe's Secret

RUTH FIELDING AT BRIARWOOD HALL
or Solving the Campus Mystery

RUTH FIELDING AT SNOW CAMP
or Lost in the Backwoods

RUTH FIELDING AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT *or Nita, the Girl Castaway*

RUTH FIELDING AT SILVER RANCH
or Schoolgirls Among the Cowboys

RUTH FIELDING ON CLIFF ISLAND
or The Old Hunter's Treasure Box

RUTH FIELDING AT SUNRISE FARM
or What Became of the Raby Orphans

RUTH FIELDING AND THE GYPSIES
or The Missing Pearl Necklace

RUTH FIELDING IN MOVING PICTURES
or Helping the Dormitory Fund

RUTH FIELDING DOWN IN DIXIE
or Great Days in the Land of Cotton

RUTH FIELDING AT COLLEGE
or The Missing Examination Papers

RUTH FIELDING IN THE SADDLE
or College Girls in the Land of Gold

RUTH FIELDING IN THE RED CROSS
or Doing Her Bit for Uncle Sam

RUTH FIELDING AT THE WAR FRONT
or The Hunt for a Lost Soldier

RUTH FIELDING HOMEWARD BOUND
or A Red Cross Worker's Ocean Perils

RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST
or The Hermit of Beach Plum Point

RUTH FIELDING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST
or The Indian Girl Star of the Movies

RUTH FIELDING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE
or The Queer Old Man of the Thousand Islands

RUTH FIELDING TREASURE HUNTING
or A Moving Picture that Became Real

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers **New York**

THE GIRL SCOUT SERIES

BY LILIAN GARIS

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid

The highest ideals of girlhood as advocated by the foremost organizations of America form the background for these stories and while unobtrusive there is a message in every volume.

1. THE GIRL SCOUT PIONEERS

or Winning the First B. C.

A story of the True Tred Troop in a Pennsylvania town. Two runaway girls, who want to see the city, are reclaimed through troop influence. The story is correct in scout detail.

2. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT BELLAIRE

or Maid Mary's Awakening

The story of a timid little maid who is afraid to take part in other girls' activities, while working nobly alone for high ideals. How she was discovered by the Bellaire Troop and came into her own as "Maid Mary" makes a fascinating story.

3. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT SEA CREST

or The Wig Wag Rescue

Luna Land, a little island by the sea, is wrapt in a mysterious seclusion, and Kitty Scuttle, a grotesque figure, succeeds in keeping all others at bay until the Girl Scouts come.

4. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT CAMP COMALONG

or Peg of Tamarack Hills

The girls of Bobolink Troop spend their summer on the shores of Lake Hocomo. Their discovery of Peg, the mysterious rider, and the clearing up of her remarkable adventures afford a vigorous plot.

5. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT ROCKY LEDGE

or Nora's Real Vacation

Nora Blair is the pampered daughter of a frivolous mother. Her dislike for the rugged life of Girl Scouts is eventually changed to appreciation, when the rescue of little Lucia, a woodland waif, becomes a problem for the girls to solve.

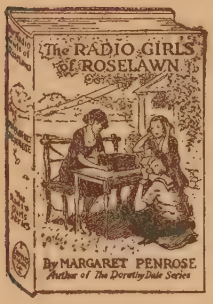
Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers **New York**

THE RADIO GIRLS SERIES

BY MARGARET PENROSE

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors
Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid



A new and up-to-date series, taking in the activities of several bright girls who become interested in radio. The stories tell of thrilling exploits, out-door life and the great part the Radio plays in the adventures of the girls and in solving their mysteries. Fascinating books that girls of all ages will want to read.

1. THE RADIO GIRLS OF ROSELAWN

or A Strange Message from the Air

Showing how Jessie Norwood and her chums became interested in radiophoning, how they gave a concert for a worthy local charity, and how they received a sudden and unexpected call for help out of the air. A girl who was wanted as a witness in a celebrated law case had disappeared, and how the radio girls went to the rescue is told in an absorbing manner.

2. THE RADIO GIRLS ON THE PROGRAM

or Singing and Reciting at the Sending Station

When listening in on a thrilling recitation or a superb concert number who of us has not longed to "look behind the scenes" to see how it was done? The girls had made the acquaintance of a sending station manager and in this volume are permitted to get on the program, much to their delight. A tale full of action and not a little fun.

3. THE RADIO GIRLS ON STATION ISLAND

or The Wireless from the Steam Yacht

In this volume the girls travel to the seashore and put in a vacation on an island where is located a big radio sending station. The big brother of one of the girls owns a steam yacht and while out with a pleasure party those on the island receive word by radio that the yacht is on fire. A tale thrilling to the last page.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers **New York**

THE MOTOR GIRLS SERIES

By MARGARET PENROSE

Author of the highly successful "Dorothy Dale Series"

12mo. Illustrated. Price per volume, $1.00 postpaid.

Since the enormous success of our "Motor Boys Series," by Clarence Young, we have been asked to get out a similar series for girls. No one is better equipped to furnish these tales than Mrs. Penrose, who, besides being an able writer, is an expert automobilist.

THE MOTOR GIRLS
or A Mystery of the Road

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON A TOUR
or Keeping a Strange Promise

THE MOTOR GIRLS AT LOOKOUT BEACH
or In Quest of the Runaways

THE MOTOR GIRLS THROUGH NEW ENGLAND
or Held by the Gypsies

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON CEDAR LAKE
or The Hermit of Fern Island

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON THE COAST
or The Waif from the Sea

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON CRYSTAL BAY
or The Secret of the Red Oar

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON WATERS BLUE
or The Strange Cruise of the Tartar

THE MOTOR GIRLS AT CAMP SURPRISE
or The Cave in the Mountain

THE MOTOR GIRLS IN THE MOUNTAINS
or The Gypsy Girl's Secret

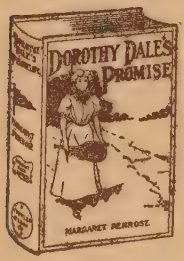
CUPPLES & LEON CO., Publishers, NEW YORK

THE DOROTHY DALE SERIES

By MARGARET PENROSE

Author of "The Motor Girls Series"

12mo. Illustrated. Price per volume, ...$1.00 postpaid.



Dorothy Dale is the daughter of an old Civil War veteran who is running a weekly newspaper in a small Eastern town. Her sunny disposition, her fun-loving ways and her trials and triumphs make clean, interesting and fascinating reading. The Dorothy Dale Series is one of the most popular series of books for girls ever published.

DOROTHY DALE: A GIRL OF TO-DAY

DOROTHY DALE AT GLENWOOD SCHOOL

DOROTHY DALE'S GREAT SECRET

DOROTHY DALE AND HER CHUMS

DOROTHY DALE'S QUEER HOLIDAYS

DOROTHY DALE'S CAMPING DAYS

DOROTHY DALE'S SCHOOL RIVALS

DOROTHY DALE IN THE CITY

DOROTHY DALE'S PROMISE

DOROTHY DALE IN THE WEST

DOROTHY DALE'S STRANGE DISCOVERY

DOROTHY DALE'S ENGAGEMENT

CUPPLES & LEON CO., Publishers, NEW YORK